LETTERS TO AN INFIDEL

SMITH

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LETTERS TO AN INFIDEL

Essays Proving the Reasonable Basis of Christianity and Answering the Attacks of Modernism and Pseudo-Science

BY

REV. MATTHEW J. W. SMITH
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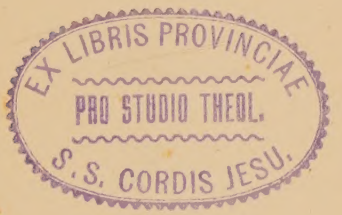
WITHDRAWN



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LETTERS TO AN INFIDEL

CHAPTER ONE

Is There a God?

So you do not believe in God? Many centuries ago it was written that only the fool said in his heart that there is no God. And the onward rush of time has not robbed the saying of its wisdom. I once visited an insane asylum. A very grave man, who afterwards was pointed out to me as a hopeless case, came up and declared that he had made a serious study of insanity and had arrived at the conclusion that there were only three sane persons alive, including, of course, himself. I fear that you are no more reasonable. Doesn't it perturb you in the least that you are out of step with all the men of all the ages, except the merest handful? You have sent me various copies of *The Truthseeker,* a free-thought

magazine. To be frank, it disgusts me. It is the shallowest publication I have ever read. The most ordinary arguments on behalf of religion are lost on its editor. He writes something that he thinks is very bright and final, but it proves as ridiculous as the argument against the resurrection of the body by the Sadducees, who asked Christ whose wife the woman who had married seven brothers in succession would be, if all arose from the dead. Having practically no faith in the spiritual, it never entered their heads that carnal marriage is an affair of earth alone.

To be an atheist is a sign of a weak brain. It shows either insanity or a feebleness of intellect that puts one in exactly the same class as the insane man who was sure that everybody except himself and two others was missing mental cylinders.

I have had much to do with the instruction of people in a religious way. And never once have I discovered any normal person who really doubted the existence of God. I have met one or two who had some deep philosophical

difficulties about Him, but never any, besides yourself, who really doubted Him.

Let us study, from a popular standpoint, the chief proofs for the existence of God. (The reader will find philosophical proofs in the appendix at the end of this book. They were also sent in letters to the infidel to whom the work is addressed, after the present chapter had been sent.)

First, consider the marvelous universe in which we live; its order, its extent, its beauty, and the very palpable fact that it must have an intelligent director. Scientists tell us that there are perhaps seventy million solar systems as important as our own, with others, undoubtedly, beyond these, in the vastness of space. On the other hand, men are giants compared with some creatures. Only lately, experiments conducted with crushed marble, quarried in New England, showed infinitesimal mites of life, which had perhaps lived imprisoned in the bowels of the earth for countless centuries. Who made these solar systems and mites? Who governs them? Certainly not man; cer-

tainly not themselves, for this would be according them powers greater than our intellects possess.

In the midst of all creation, there is order. Men and other creatures fight among themselves, but they never succeed in overturning the balance of nature, in the long run. The smallest insect and the vastest planetary system are alike regulated by laws marvelous in their wisdom; and the universe goes on, no matter what we do.

Its enthralling beauty, its magnificent variety in unity, its awful dimensions, with everything going ahead so systematically and arising so far above the possibilities of human intelligence, demand that we acknowledge a power responsible for all this. That power is God.

And only by doing violence to our common sense can we claim that this wonderful system of worlds and other beings made itself. Nothing ever makes itself. Search the pages of history and the tomes of science. Go into the highways and byways of common life. And you will seek in vain for anything that has ever

made itself. Every effect demands a cause, and you can find nothing without a cause. Yet reason demands that all we see around us and all that has preceded it should have started somewhere. There is only one logical answer to this question, and that is to acknowledge God, a being who did not cause Himself and who was not caused by any other, but who exists necessarily, and who made all else.

If there is no God, create something! Prove your power by taking nothing, and commanding there to be something! You say that you cannot. I know that!

But you seem to think that things just happen to be, without any power higher than yourself having had anything to do with them. If there is no God, you will have to admit that man is the highest of intellectual powers. Why, then, cannot he create?

There is nothing around man, among the things of earth, that is his equal. The dull clod of clay, the roaring ocean, plant life, dumb animals—all these are inferior to him. Storms and earthquakes and other disasters may over-

whelm him, at times, but generally speaking he is easily the master of the world. Both reason and religion proclaim him the pinnacle of material creation, and he is making steady progress in overcoming the forces of nature and reducing them to slavery for him.

Yet man, with all his greatness, is weak. He is so fearfully weak that in times of distress he naturally cries for mercy to the Power that he must confess is above him. What is man, when we compare his power to that which rules the universe? He cannot create a single mite of life. Even if he could put chemicals together, and produce something that fed and grew and propagated and then died, he could not explain what made the chemicals effect this. The question would be as puzzling as ever.

Whatever man is, if he has an iota of common sense he must feel certain that he is not God. Master of the earth in one sense, yet he is at times its plaything. Tornadoes can come and sweep him and all his possessions to utter ruin. Fire can destroy in a few minutes what

it takes him decades to make. His finest and greatest ships are at times made the food of the sea. In his proudest moments, he is likely to be stricken with death, without the least warning, and buried and forgotten. Only the few live in the memories of others, and those who do are remembered for their evil and their weakness as much as for their good and their strength.

Have you the impudence to claim that man, poor weak man, is God? And yet the evidence of your senses, without the aid of revelation, would assure you that man is the highest and greatest being in the universe, providing you will not admit the existence of God.

If you eliminate God, you make existence a farce. If I did not believe in God, I would be tempted to commit suicide. I could see no reason whatsoever for continuing the battle of life, were it not for the hope of a happy hereafter. I have tried to live right; yet I have seen many of the wicked prosper far more than myself. I have fought the battle of decency; and been persecuted for my efforts. I have

felt within myself the desire to be virtuous, and on the other hand have recognized a lower self striving for the mastery, and conquered in its attempts only by the utmost effort. Do you mean to tell me that there is no Power that will reward me if I win in this battle for virtue, and punish me if I yield to what common decency tells me is my lower self? What would be the use of living, if this were so? I must accept God, or be a fool.

The following newspaper clipping, dealing with a preacher notorious for his denial of orthodox Christian revelation, shows how necessary belief in God is to those who are thinkers even though they wish to believe as little as possible:

"Belief in God is dictated both by spiritual and intellectual necessity, the Rev. Charles Edwards Park, of Boston, told a large audience in the mission in Unity church, 19th avenue and Broadway, last night.

" 'Certain things we must believe, whether we like it or not,' he said.

" 'Belief in God is dictated by intellectual necessity because without it the entire fabric of our speculation

falls to the ground in ruins and our minds are insulted and betrayed.

" 'Life is full of incompletions, disappointments, injustices, unfulfilled promises, deferred hopes and unsatisfied longings.

" 'This life is fragmentary, and the sole comfort available to us is faith in that unseen "rest of being" which completes this fragment.

" 'Thus, faith in God, who stands for the "whole of being" and who answers to that "rest of being" which the soul craves, becomes a spiritual necessity.

" 'Without the thought of God, life is a grim and tragic jest.' " [1]

[1] Denver *Express*, January 6, 1925.

CHAPTER TWO

Free Will and the Spiritual Soul

You cannot be serious in your allegation that man is without free will. Our proof that he has it is common sense. I know that there are some things which I can do and do not do; and you know that the same is true of you. Every man knows this. Our whole plan of civilization, with its prisons, its system of fines for offenders, its initiatives, referendums, recalls, legislatures and all else—the whole machinery of democratic government—argues that man knows that his fellow men are responsible beings, free to act or not to act in certain matters.

There is a voice, conscience, within you and every other man which accuses you when you do wrong and gives you satisfaction when you

do right. Continued wrong-doing to yourself and others may dull this inward accuser, but unless you become insane you cannot kill it altogether. Materialist philosophers may argue their heads off attempting to prove that there is no free will, but if their neighbor has a bad boy who is always stealing from them they are just as likely as any other man to demand his punishment.

The fallacious argument is sometimes used that statistics can be gathered with great accuracy for crime and that this is proof of the fact that men are moved by great general laws instead of their wills. But the simple fact is that the statistics differ widely in different ages and different countries, showing that religion, the kind of education received, etc., cause wide divergence. But even if this were not true, what would be odd about it if statistics did run much the same? Nobody denies that the same kind of beings act much the same. They would differ in nature if they did not. There are only a few different types of men and we all have exactly the same na-

ture, so that nobody but a sophist would expect his neighbors to be very different from his other neighbors. I do not need to be much of a prophet to foretell the fact that when the airplane becomes popular it will be common to read of one's having tumbled down on somebody's house and killed a number of persons. There will be fools in the air just as there are fools in the road today.

In order to prove how easy it is to gather statistics that show men are much the same but by no means prove the lack of free will, consider the motorist. We can easily divide automobile drivers into a few classes: The speeders who risk everybody's lives, as well as their own; the ultracareful driver who takes his machine so slowly that he is a menace to everybody behind him, and who sometimes does more harm than the speeder; the ordinary driver who keeps his machine going fairly fast and who is the safest man on the road; and the freak who is neither consistently slow nor fast, but who annoys everybody by being neither fish nor flesh. Yet who but a man trying to

deceive himself and escape the consequences of his own moral acts would argue that the autoist does not have it in his own power to move the machine as fast as he wills? The universal presence of automobile traffic laws and the speed limit signs that greet him at the entrance of every village tell such a philosophizer that he is a liar. Yet we have not had much difficulty classifying autoists, and if we took the trouble to keep a careful check for a few days on any well traveled road we could come to a rather close estimate of just how many of each classification there were in any state, provided we knew the number of automobilists in that commonwealth. But does this give the least valid argument against free will? Hardly. If you think that it does, go sixty miles an hour the next time you drive and test out your philosophy on any speed officer. See how soon you gain the ear of any ordinary man. What the ordinary man knows about ordinary things is worth accepting. It is clearly the law of nature. But although statistics let me know fairly well how many

offenses I can expect, I feel no urge to relieve the individual owners of responsibility.

You have also told me that you cannot accept the spirituality of the soul. If the soul is not spiritual, it cannot act spiritually. Hence thought would be material. As proof of the materialness of thought, I beg you to catch a thought and weigh it. Also destroy it and give me the pieces. If it is material, you ought to be able to do this. If you deny the spirituality of the soul, you are perforce made to deny that thought is spiritual. If it is material, how can I express it by print and convey exactly the same thought to your mind that has been in mine? Or how are you able to classify things, if there is not some sort of a spiritual image in you that fits them? How do you know that a horse is a horse or that any other thing is what it is, when you meet it? You cannot carry a real horse around in your mind. Yet you can classify one when you see it. Evidently you can carry some image of it. Yet it cannot be a material image, for if the horse you meet is a small one, a large

one, a red one, even a monstrosity, you still recognize it as a horse if it looks anything like one. The image to which you fit it, therefore, is not bound in by any set limits. It is a universal, spiritual image. In the same way, you recognize a triangle as a triangle, whether it is a right-angled triangle, an isosceles one or whatever kind it is; whether it is big or small, etc. Only a spiritual image could fit all these various triangles.

It might be argued that experience with animal instinct throws out this line of reasoning. Sheep, for instance, are able to distinguish wolves from shepherd dogs, even with more accuracy than men can, but still sheep are by no means intellectual. The same can be said of other animals, in their ability to classify what is good or harmful to them. But their instinct is very limited. There is not an unlimited power of classifying under universal ideas, such as men possess. Instinct does in some measure appear like the intellectual power of classifying, but it is so clearly a blind faculty in its working that nobody but the very ignorant ever mistakes it for intellectual operation. So far as it goes, it is often more correct than our power. However, it differs in a number of ways from intellectual operation.

For instance, no brute can arbitrarily join its impressions and bring about new ideas, such as we can. If I speak to you about a centaur, you know what I mean; but neither you nor anybody else ever saw such a being. Nor can a lower animal ever classify what is wholly spiritual. A brute, furthermore, cannot reason with such impressions as it has. Its power of classification is, therefore, not like ours. Outside the very limited faculty given to it by instinct for the recognition of one or two classes of other beings, such power does not exist in any lower animal.

Your power of reasoning, your power of turning the entire intellect and its acts back on itself so that it can, as it were, take its whole self into itself and understand itself, prove your intellect to be spiritual. You cannot do this with matter. Try it. Take a half of a table, push it into the other half and draw it out again. Or stick your fist into your head up to the elbow and draw it out again, without hurting either member.

Unless you want to be nonsensical, you have to admit spiritual acts in yourself. And spiritual acts demand a spiritual actor, the soul.

Furthermore, if these acts are not dependent on matter, the source whence they come, the spiritual soul, does not depend on matter. It can exist without it. Hence your soul, according to the laws of nature, must survive the body.

That the soul is immortal can be proved in various ways. One way is the inability of you or any one else to find something that will destroy it. Being spiritual, it is simple, i. e., without parts. If it were not, it could not take objects into itself by spiritual images or engage in reflex actions. Inasmuch as it is simple, you cannot kill it by disintegrating it, since it has no parts. All the laboratorians who have ever lived have never suggested a way to hurt it. Nor can any act of its own destroy its natural activity. History, then, shows that it is indestructible. God could destroy it, but this would be against His wisdom, as He made it immortal.

The common consent of mankind proves it immortal. Only occasional freaks have denied it. The tendency of man towards per-

fect happiness proves it immortal, for we could not be perfectly happy if we thought that we were going to be altogether wiped out; and there cannot be a universal tendency in mankind unless it is founded on a law of nature. The fact that all men recognize the existence of a moral law also demands an immortal soul, for if they were some day to pass out of existence it would not matter very much to them how they acted and the law would be frustrated—another way of saying that nature would be a lie. Without immortality, there would be no efficient sanction to the natural moral law.

I am afraid that you are like other modern "philosophers" who use everything possible to find out the truth except that most necessary of all aids—common sense. No matter how intricate a thing is, if it will not stand the test of common sense it is nonsense.

Without the guidance of Revelation, the philosophers of ancient Greece arrived at proofs of the immortality of the soul, which had been taught among believers from Adam's

day. In the *Dialogues of Plato,* that great Greek argued that it is only by intrinsic corruption that living things we see around us are destroyed. While we speak of a man dying because he ate contaminated food, it was not the food itself that killed him, but the contamination of his own body. The food was the cause of the fatal disease, but it was the disease itself, not the food, that did the slaying. Plato called attention to the fact that while the body was decidedly susceptible, in this way, to outside influences, not a single case could be cited where a spiritual disorder caused a man's purely spiritual functions to stop working. No matter how great a sin he committed, he was still able to think. And you could not conceive of any intellectual evil that would rob him of the use of his reasoning and will power. Remember, now, that we are not speaking of the supernatural, but of the natural powers of the soul. Sin can kill supernatural life in the soul, but it never destroys the natural faculties—intellect and will. It sometimes weakens the body to such an ex-

tent that the intellect or will can no longer work properly. But the faculty is there, ready to function the minute the doctors get the body back in proper condition. No intellectual evil, however, is serious enough, as Plato showed, to make the soul separate itself from the body. Death always works the other way —through deterioration of the body. These facts, so evident in the experience of every man, prove, showed Plato, that the soul could not be intrinsically corrupted in its natural powers. Therefore it must be conceded that it is immortal.

Plato also held that the desire for immortality which we find implanted in every human soul must be taken as a proof that it is to continue perpetually. Nature does nothing in vain and this desire would not have been implanted by her if it were to prove inane.

Consider the reasoning in this poem, "Cato's Soliloquy," by Joseph Addison:

"It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,

This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?—
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Here will I hold. If there's a Power above us
(And that there is, all Nature cries aloud
Through all her works), He must delight in virtue:
And that which He delights in, must be happy.
Eternity!—thou pleasing, dreadful thought!"

The Scholastics assure us that the soul has a natural aptitude for immortality if it has all the requisites for perpetual immanent operation. By immanent operation, we mean acts that begin and end in itself, as growing, for instance, in a plant. The soul, after its separation from the body, retains only radically its vegetative and sensitive properties, but it still has full scope for intellective and will power. It can consider itself, God and other spirits, and it can recall cognitions it had in the present life. Philosophy proves these facts. There is no reason for conceding

immortality to brute souls, like those of dogs, for they cannot have any apprehension of spiritual things in this life, and there would be no way that their souls could be active after they had been separated from the body.

You cannot kill my soul any more than you can destroy a thought that emanates from it. Only God could annihilate a human soul, and He will never do it.

An argument advanced by Kant (1724–1804) in his *Critique of Practical Reason* for the immortality of the soul is striking. Summing it up, the Cardinal Mercier Philosophy, vol. ii, page 458, declares: "Virtue or the observance of duty is not the same as happiness, but virtue is worthy of happiness and the moral consciousness demands it. Since the present life does not fulfil this demand, we must postulate the reality of a future life." This involves another postulate, "God, for an authoritative voice implies a law-giver and reward for moral conduct a rewarder."

CHAPTER THREE

Was Religion Man's Invention?

Your assertion that the religious spirit is man-made, created by chieftains and kings to sway the people, is a thesis often forwarded but very difficult, indeed, to prove. When we find something universally implanted in the human heart, it is a law of nature. And never has any land been discovered where the people did not practice some sort of religion. No fact of history is better attested than this. No matter where we go, we find the altar, whether it be in some magnificent Gothic Cathedral of the Roman fold, or merely an austere table holding a Book over which a Protestant of the old school preaches, or some Indian medicine-man or hideously bedecked voodoo doctor of the wilds, chanting over his herbs and pots.

There have been schools of thought that have tried to explain the religious impulse of

men by their ignorance of the laws of nature. They say that the aborigines feared the winds, the sea, the mountains, etc., and their imaginations created gods who were the result of that fear. But they forget that even the most learned nations have had well developed religions as far back as we can trace, and that the beginnings of the Chaldees, the Egyptians, etc., are lost in the mists of history. Do not forget that it is only a theory that men have come up from savagery to barbarism and then to civilization. There is considerable proof for the opposite theory that there always was a sort of culture in some parts of the earth and that the barbarians and the savages were those who wandered away and fell.

There are other persons who have attempted to explain all religion on psychological grounds. They have thought that man had dreams or subconscious experiences from which he evolved his systems of belief. But this would hardly explain the universal belief in an overruling God. Remember that while polytheism held sway in the ancient world and is still

uppermost in some parts of the earth, belief in one supreme God was held everywhere. A number of the literary religious productions of the most ancient pagan civilizations—those that adored cats and bulls and frogs as well as a multitude of man-made images—speak of one supreme God.

As Egypt became united, the letters "Ea" were put after the names of the various local gods, to indicate that they were participations in the one great God. Roman and Greek literature, too, bear abundant testimony to the belief in the one true God. It is true that the pagans were not in the habit of worshiping Him through their temples, but at least they acknowledged Him. And that such an idea could have come to them without the evidence of God in creation or without their being taught, I deny. We come into the world with our intellects a perfect blank, as you can easily find out by questioning any baby.

There are other persons, like yourself, who hold that religion was a product of society; that it was brought about by the police power.

It is true, and I would be the last to deny, that without religion there can be no civilization; that worship is absolutely necessary to keep the majority of men decent. But apart from its social force, religion exercises a moral sway over the inmost conscience. It is felt just as necessary for the man far off from civilization as for him in the midst of it. Looking at the forces of nature around him, he realizes his utter helplessness if left entirely to himself; face to face with a death that he knows he cannot evade, unable to explain the injustices of this life and its sufferings if there is no God who will make recompense to the good, feeling in his heart that the wicked must be punished, seeing evidences of the God of nature in everything that surrounds him, he does not need even education to realize that he has the duty of offering worship.

Man has a will which tends towards absolute good. He is not satisfied with anything that earth has to offer. He knows, therefore, that he is destined for the enjoyment of complete perfection, which we call God. We tend to-

wards perfect happiness. And happiness of this kind can be given to us by no creature.

You tell me that, even admitting a God, I still have the necessity of proving that you must worship Him. Your own heart ought to show you this. If God made you, it was certainly for His own honor and glory. It could not have been for any reason beyond Himself, for then His work would have been dependent, through its end, on something other than Himself—an impossibility. And if He made you with a yearning for absolute happiness, He would deny His own wisdom if He did not intend that yearning to be fulfilled. But outside of Him, as experience well proves, there can be no absolute, lasting happiness. There can be only fleeting snatches of it. Wealth, power, love of woman, change of position—all these are mirages that may bring some enjoyment, but they bring a quota of pain every time, and often prove the merest illusions.

You are dependent on God for everything you have. You need His sustaining power every moment to keep you in being. Your

only hope of ultimate success is in reaching Him. Reason alone shows this. Why, then, refuse to cultivate His friendship?

You owe Him both private and public worship. If you refuse Him the homage of your heart, He who made you, keeps you and must necessarily know every thought, word and deed of you, cannot be fooled. But if the heart is full, it must express itself in outward actions. A sincere heart cannot do otherwise. And inasmuch as you are a member of human society, and society owes Him just as much as the individual, reason shows that society must worship Him.

Are we free to worship Him in any way? Hardly, if He has stipulated forms by which He wishes to be honored. The Catholic Church can prove that she is the custodian of those forms.

CHAPTER FOUR

Did God Make a Revelation?

You would hardly argue against the statement that God could make a revelation. This is presuming, of course, that there is a God. He is all powerful, so it should not be more difficult for Him to give us a message or series of messages than some earthly ruler. Nor can it involve any harm to His majesty, His wisdom or any Divine attribute. There is nothing at all unreasonable on the part of man in the acceptance of such a revelation. If he can be illuminated by other men, most assuredly he can be taught by higher beings. Some of your kind have objected that to receive a revelation hurts his dignity; that it injures his autonomy. If this were true, it would be an indignity to sit at the feet of any university professor, because he knows more than the student.

You want to know why God, if He made a revelation, did not give it to each individual soul instead of putting them at the mercy of other men, who might lie to them. My answer to this is that He has safeguarded His real revelation so well that there is no danger of a mistake if men use ordinary common sense. The custodian of revelation, the Catholic Church, is so widespread and has such impregnable credentials that if any reasonable man studies her claims he will have to admit their logic. And the fact that she has had the profoundest influence on civilization of any organization ever established is in itself a demand that she be investigated. God, Catholics claim, has endowed their Church with infallibility. He has, therefore, made it possible for us to evade all liars.

It is consistent with God's wisdom, also, that revelation should come to us mediately, instead of immediately. The most striking phenomenon in all nature is its unity. Try as they will to disturb it, men cannot succeed in overcoming the general tendency towards uni-

versal good in creation. But if there is unity in natural matters, and it is an evidence of the Divine wisdom, we would expect to find it in supernatural affairs. The same God made the natural and the supernatural. And unity is enforced by unified government. We might naturally expect a wise God to put His revelation into the custody of an organization conspicuous for unity.

You doubt that God helps us by offering us a revelation which in some ways is above our power to comprehend, and you say that you believe only what your senses tell you. But you will have to admit that you cannot understand everything that is natural. How can you expect to grasp the entire supernatural, which is above the natural? Your own body is full of mysteries, which neither you nor anyone else can understand. Why, for instance, will your stomach readily digest tripe, the lining of the stomach of a cow, and not digest itself? You cannot answer this and neither can any scientist. Why is it impossible to form synthetic life? Why has every laboratory attempt

to do so failed? Why must life always come from the living, in a way so mysterious that we cannot fathom it, although it is one of the commonest things of experience? You cannot comprehend these truths. Why, with electricity so common, cannot we explain what it is? Neither you nor anybody else knows exactly what it is. Now if you are not able to explain affairs purely natural, how can you expect to explain the Trinity or other mysteries so profound that we would never know of their existence if it were not for revelation?

Inasmuch as man is on this earth on probation, it is just as necessary for him to serve with the intellect and will as with the senses. It would seem most reasonable, therefore, to expect to meet with mysteries in religion.

But what particular good do they serve? The question is a fair one. They serve this good, that they allow us to know something at least about the most sublime affairs, and we are thereby exalted. If you imagine that this is not so, you have never done any reading in theology. There are thrills in this study that

never come in anything else. Mysteries also serve the good of allowing us to gain merit by faith.

Scholastic philosophy proves, by a series of most convincing arguments, that the end for which man was created is God. To know and love God is the highest natural destiny to which we can attain, but revelation shows us that God raises those who serve Him to a supernatural level and that our end, in heaven, will be to know and enjoy God as He knows and enjoys Himself. We will be deified, made godlike. Here is one of the reasons why we should expect to find mysteries in revelation. It is intended to bring us to a destiny so far above anything we know on this earth that we cannot even imagine the joy that awaits the faithful. We should, therefore, expect to find it hinting at things more than human in their grandeur and profundity.

And that a supernatural revelation is necessary is further proved by reason alone. The human race, in its present condition, cannot by its own powers, without the help of God,

learn the truth about its destiny or regulate its life. History proves this. Wherever men have been left to their own devices, they have mixed superstition and immorality with their religion to such an extent that they have dissipated nations, retarded civilization or ruined it where it had been established. One people alone in antiquity had a steady development toward higher things in religion—the Jewish. The Romans and others reached such depravity in sexual sins that we would hardly dare to describe their public condition in polite society today. And this condition was not confined to the occasional weakling who must be everywhere expected among men; it afflicted all but the very few. History furnishes an irrefutable argument that revealed religion alone gives a check to man's passions and keeps him from indulging in sophism. Even the great Greek philosophers, men who reached the pinnacle of unaided reason in their researches, were often men far from blameless. Their private lives were marred by scandal and they could close their eyes to rank injustice.

If we examine the mental condition of mankind, too, we must concede the necessity of enlightenment from above. Only the few can procure a higher education, and only a small percentage of those who have such an advantage become real scholars. But to realize the end for which man is created, and to be able to prove it by reason alone, requires the deepest study. Many men, because of economic conditions, would find it impossible to become philosophers. Nor, if men did attain the necessary learning, could they sway the masses to accept their conclusions. To be a philosopher gives one an honorary prestige, but no authority. If God speaks, however, and we can prove that a revelation purporting to come from Him is really His, and that revelation promises rewards or punishment, there is authority here to make men pay attention. A city council that would pass ordinances without attaching any penalty to their non-fulfillment would soon be a joke. And any attempt to get the masses or the individual to follow a virtuous course of action by having religion without definite sanc-

tions would have the same result. If we were to rely on reason alone, we would know in a vague sort of a way that God would punish the wicked. But revelation gives us definite facts about the reward or punishment that awaits as a result of the way we live. Morals could not be protected, in man's present state, without this definite knowledge.

A smart atheist once said that unbelievers led clean lives because they had no god to forgive them if they did sin. Their pretense to virtue is as amusing as their pretense to "rationalism." If they were virtuous, they would not be atheists. If they were rationalists, they could not possibly remain in doubt about the existence of God.

CHAPTER FIVE

No Vicious Circle in our Faith

You write that our whole system of religion revolves in a vicious circle. The Bible, you argue, tells us that there is a God, God is supposed to be the inspirer of the Bible, and we adore God because the Bible tells us to, each denomination making its own particular interpretation of how He is to be adored.

I beg leave to differ with you in your plan of argument. It is true that the Bible tells us that there is a God, but if we could not prove apart from it that God exists, I and all other persons who have given serious study to religion could not think of wasting our time in the service of God on its unsupported authority. Kindly give us credit with having at least as good a supply of brains as yourself. The people who believe in God and belong to the Church are in no sense inferior to you and

your kind intellectually, and you cannot raise a single question that has not been fought out and thoroughly answered in their literature.

It is true that practically all children and most adults accept religion on authority alone, without going very deeply into the question. Philosophical minds are rare. Even persons educated in philosophy only occasionally become real philosophers. And I have no desire to try to prove that everybody approaches the subject of religion in a thoroughly logical way. Nevertheless, religion can prove that it is in the fullest accord with reason, and if you study it in this way you will never again make the charge that it works in a vicious circle.

The way religion can be put on an absolutely logical basis is this: First, by proving that God exists, using arguments from reason alone; secondly, by proving from reason that it is possible for Him to make a revelation; thirdly, by investigating whether He has made a revelation; fourthly, by eliminating what is contradictory or puerile in so-called revelations; fifthly, by accepting whatever revelation

bears positive evidence that He has made it, accepting it on the authority of God revealing, i. e. making an act of faith.

This is exactly what the Catholic Church does. Her philosophy proves to her that there is a God. This philosophy is a classification of common sense. Unlike Kant, she does not throw out the evidence of our senses, but accepts the evident fact that things look like they seem to us, and sound, taste, feel and smell as our senses say they do. If they did not, an artist would have to present us with a description of every picture before we would know what it meant and no one could copy another's picture; the orchestra leader would have to assure us that his musicians were playing music instead of jangling, etc. Even if the artist did inform us, we would not then be sure, if the senses are not reliable. Some Kantians might object to our carrying their noumena and phenomena doctrine so far, but this is its logical conclusion—rankest skepticism. Common sense is the only guide to philosophy and common sense tells us to trust

our senses, if we are normal. By using our senses, by seeing the fact everywhere proved that every effect must have a cause, and by realizing that such a thing as an infinite chain of causes is an absurdity, we must come back to an uncaused First Cause. Also by using our senses and seeing the marvelous order that exists in the world, we are simply compelled to admit an intelligent direction of all this creation, and again we are forced back to the idea of God. Other proofs there are, too, of His existence, but these are enough for any one not deliberately trying to evade the truth. They are the two proofs so palpable to most people that the vast majority of men never have a doubt that God is.

If God exists, and if reason tells us, as it does, that we are utterly dependent upon Him, common sense demands that we search for some evidence of His dealings with us. The mere fact that there are so many pretended revelations in the world should make us expect to find a real one. We all know that we have need of help. We can see by the evidence

of history that men, left to themselves, or involved in false systems of thought, reach the most dangerous and most ridiculous conclusions. But if there is in history any system of religion that shows a constant uplift among its followers and which, if strictly adhered to, causes the practice of all that is admittedly finest and most beautiful in the human character, that religion demands investigation. Christianity is such a religion. It can trace its lineage back to the very dawn of the race, through the expectation of the Patriarchs who looked for a Redeemer, through the Jewish religion hoping for a Messias and with its prophets revealing more and more about Him, down to His coming, His fulfillment of prophecy and the establishment of His Church. It is the religion of advance to civilization, not of degradation to barbarism. It is a religion of uplift. It spread far and wide despite the fact that it was at utter variance with the sinful spirit of the world. It, therefore, demands the attention of serious minds. It is the only "revelation" that always uplifts and

is never contradictory. We are here speaking of Papal Christianity, not of the sects, which teach everything from atheism and Mohammedanism to near-Catholicity.

And remember, dear sir, that Catholicism existed for some time before the Bible on which you say it is based existed. Centuries passed before in an official way the Church settled all questions about just what was and what was not the Bible. Yet the Church went right on. True enough it is that the Bible bears testimony to it. But if the Bible perished, the Church would go right ahead.

Where in this is the vicious circle? To throw out religion simply because we quote its written records in proof of it is as ridiculous as to refuse to accept American citizenship because the ideals of citizenship are learned in school-books. You might do this and argue that you wanted a citizenship that dealt with real life, not with school-books. But you would be very properly answered that the books reflect real life. And I answer you in the same way about the Church. The Church can

prove by reason that God exists; she can prove by reason that He has made a revelation; and she offers the Bible to you and me as part of the revelation He has made, but reminds us constantly that she is a living voice destined to teach and recalls us to the fact that the Bible is trustworthy simply on her authority. She quotes texts from the Bible to prove her right to teach, but she claimed that right even before the Bible was written and she proved that right by the miraculous growth she enjoyed in a world that was utterly at variance with the type of doctrine she promulgated—facts of history that you dare not dispute.

Her use of the Bible to uphold herself as a teacher is like the quotation of the United States Constitution by an American who helped to draw up the document. The mere fact that he helped to frame the Constitution and agreed to its provisions proves that he thought according to its way before it became the fundamental law of the land. But with certain types of mind it might be useful at times for him to quote it to assure his auditors that he still

conformed to that standard. The Church, an authorized teaching body, was responsible for the formulation of a large body of her doctrines in written form, the Bible. It is only right that she should, thereafter, refer to these writings as proof that she holds these doctrines. But her having existed before the writings were penned proves that there is no vicious circle in the fact that the writings clearly indicate her right to teach. She is the authorizer of those writings, but she was able to do the authorizing before the writings were drawn up.

Your argument about a vicious circle, however, would hold in all strictness against the old-fashioned Protestant who based his religion on the Bible and the Bible alone. To be logical, he would have to prove from the book itself that it is inspired. I, for one, cannot see how this can be done. No argument that I have ever seen has convinced me. I rest my belief purely on the insistence of the Catholic Church that it is God's word. It is very beautiful, but so are many pious books that are not divinely inspired. It makes me

better to read it, but so does the uninspired *Imitation of Christ.* It carries with it a sort of unction; but so does it if I gaze on the Rocky Mountains. I need something definite to make me accept the Bible as an unusual revelation. And I have that something definite in the Church of which the Scripture is an historic witness, but which has other witnesses as well.

CHAPTER SIX

Miracles Are Historic Facts

Your contention that miracles are impossible, while I know that it is very common today, rather puzzles me. Presuming the existence of God (which we have proved), it is inconceivable how any one could have the temerity to deny their possibility, even though he may be fool enough to doubt that they have happened in actual fact.

By a miracle I mean the temporary setting aside of the ordinary law to gain some effect notable for its wonderfulness and as proof of some truth. If God exists—a fact you occasionally seem to concede—He can certainly work a miracle if He wishes. He can set aside the law that He has made. Nor is it in any sense a denial of His wisdom, for He has foreseen from all eternity what He would do in this particular case. There is nothing at

all repugnant in Him to the idea of a miracle. Nor is it repugnant from the viewpoint of creatures. The mere fact that they are hedged in by certain laws argues no absolute necessity for their always being so bound.

Furthermore, there is indisputable proof that miracles have occurred. The Christian religion was not propagated in an age when men were utterly ignorant about the laws of nature. It made its appearance in a highly civilized age. It first arose in Judea, whose Sadducees were counterparts in many respects of modern materialistic philosophers. They believed nothing but what their eyes told them, and sometimes they refused the evidence of their own eyes. If they could have punctured the claims of Christ to be a miracle worker, they would have most certainly done so. On the contrary, they urged that He be put to death because He was winning so many followers by His miracles!

The spread of the new faith through the Roman Empire went ahead despite the fact that it caused a complete revolution in both

public and private standards of morals. Fornication was taken as a matter of course among the pagans. It was expected and caused not even the lifting of an eyebrow. And it was such a system as this that Christianity, with its doctrine of personal denial, conquered. Pagan temples where sodomy and adultery were openly practiced, in full view of the public, gave way to Christian churches where the confessional and its humiliation of human pride and lust rose up.

This conquest in itself was such a miracle of grace that nothing like it appears elsewhere on the pages of history. But physical miracles, such as the curing of the sick, were often the means of opening the public's eyes.

Deny them if you wish. But you are an ass to do so. History tells a story that you cannot possibly disprove. And only by doing violence to intelligence and common honesty can you deny them.

You can turn to the writings of pagan Rome and find verification of how balls of fire arose from the earth and drove away the working-

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men who tried to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem in the time of Julian the Apostate (A. D. 361–363), to make a mockery of Christ.

You can search the writings of the Jews in vain for a denial of the miracles claimed for Christ by His followers.

And if you are not convinced, you can go to Europe today and find body after body of canonized saints, kept integral for centuries without embalming; you can see the very heart of St. Teresa (died October 4, 1582), transverberated with its fleshy sword of love, intact to this very day, after three centuries. You can go to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in France and if you stay a year count at least 500 doctors of all faiths who examine patients before and after cures and find themselves unable to give a natural explanation of how these things happen. You can search indisputable literature, and find that raising of the dead to life, the reading of the secrets of human hearts, the foretelling of the future, the casting out of demons, and the healing of the sick have been common in the lives of great saints

all through Catholic history. I refer you to the lives of the saints in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* or to the Rev. Alban Butler's works.

Sneer if you wish. It is you who are the fool. The facts are against you.

The following, from a letter to the *Church Progress,* St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 4, 1924, by the Rev. M. D. Lyons, S. J., demands investigation from "scientists" who claim that miracles are impossible; it tells of "laboratory" tests which raise our contention far above the hypothetical stage:

"The other day I was looking through that remarkable work, the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, and was amazed to learn of the frequency with which saints' bodies have been found incorrupt years after their deaths. God in His goodness seems to be pleased to pay special marks of respect to the earthly remains of those who served Him best. Frequently these special marks take the form of remarkable increases in physical beauty, absences of cadaveric rigidity, appearances of supernatural lights and haloes, fragrant odors, and other like marvels; but the number of instances in which saints' bodies have been preserved miraculously is astonishing. I was able to

find over 150 such cases, though the total number is certainly far in excess of this figure.

"Quite a number of the saints who received this favor are the objects of widespread veneration on the part of American Catholics. Rose of Lima, Vincent of Paul, Francis Xavier, Philip Neri, Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, Charles Borromeo, John of the Cross and Teresa of Spain are just a few of these.

"In the case of St. Rose of Lima, after her death her body remained so flexible and appeared so full of color that the doctors were afraid that she was not really dead, and to make sure they used a mirror to see whether she still breathed. A few years afterward her body was found to be in practically the same condition as it was on the day of her decease.

"The case of St. Francis Xavier, the great apostle of India, is still more wonderful. After his death, in 1552, abandoned on Sancian, an island off the coast of China, his body was buried in quicklime. Some time later it was dug up and found to be perfectly preserved, whereupon it was taken to Goa to be the object of pious veneration there. It remained in this condition until 1870, when the right arm was dissevered and sent to Rome, where it is now kept in the Church of the Gesu. After his arm was cut off the body slowly shriveled and dried up, so that now his features are scarcely recognizable.

"St. Charles Borromeo's body is today in the same

condition as that of St. Francis Xavier, though it is still shown as a miraculously preserved body. It is now nearly three centuries since this great Archbishop of Milan sanctified the earth with his presence.

"Even in our own times this phenomenon has not been rare; on the contrary, it seems to be of even more frequent occurrence than formerly. A recent example is that of Venerable Anthony Maria Claret, C. M. F., who died in 1870 as Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba. In 1897, the body was translated to a new vault and was seen by thousands of people, and again in 1906, when it was officially examined by ecclesiastical authorities, the corpse was found to be perfectly preserved.

"Blessed Madeleine Sophie Barat, the foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the holy cure of Ars, Blessed John Vianney, Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, famous as a prophetess of Rome, Bernadette Soubirous, the little girl of Lourdes, and the remarkable holy child of Cork, Little Nell of Holy God, are some of the more recent holy persons who have received this honor.

"It is regrettable that miracles such as these are not better known to both Catholics and Protestants, for such a knowledge would surely strengthen the faith of the one and help to convert the other."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Error of Modernism

You tell me that if there is anything to religion, it must depend on the urgings of sincere hearts, not on historical data. I see that you are a Modernist, if anything. This sect, which is not honest enough to organize separately, but which tries to exist among all the Christian denominations, holds as its fundamental tenet that there is a religious urging in man which is the only revelation, and that every religion is good, some forms being more perfect than others, all arising from this same religious urging. The Modernist is a pragmatist: he thinks that a thing is true if it "works." He says that if it aids me to believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, the doctrine is true for me, because it helps me. He claims to be very broadminded; but he is not so broadminded as to admit that I

might be right in my insistence that religion has an historic basis. He will admit to me that he believes in Christ; but he will not confess that there is historic evidence that Christ claimed to be God and worked miracles in proof of this.

I, on the other hand, with all orthodox Christians, put my religion, not on the shifting sands of inner urgings, but on the hard practical basis of history. I claim, and can prove it, that a Redeemer was expected for years and that the most particular prophecies were made about Him, long before He arrived. I can turn to Isaias, who lived centuries before Him, and find an excellent and detailed reference to the ignominous death He was to suffer (C. 53). I can turn to the Psalms of David, written hundreds of years before He was born, and find reference to such details of His Passion as the piercing of His hands and His feet and the division of His clothing by lot. And in the other prophets, I can find a wealth of information about Him. Neither you nor any other unbeliever can deny that the

Old Testament existed years, parts of it centuries, before He was born, and neither dare you deny the accuracy of the prophecies fulfilled by Him and the Jewish people. It could hardly have happened by accident that, years before the events, false prophets could have foretold the rejection of Christ by the Jews and their dispersion over the earth, with the conversion of the Gentiles.

Yet if you read the Old Testament with common honesty in your heart, you must admit that these prophecies are outlined there.

And not only did Christ fulfill prophecy, but He worked many miracles, established a definite Church organization, claimed to be God, foretold the coming of the Holy Ghost, who actually arrived, and asserted that His Church would last until the end of the world, would have all truth, and could not be prevailed against by the gates of hell. These are hard historic facts.

He was promised practically from the dawn of time and arrived in fulfillment of that promise. He claimed to be God and proved

it. He established a Church. And I would be a fool if, with the knowledge of all this from history, I did not accept what He and that Church taught, on the authority of God revealing, through Him and it.

Let the Modernists worship themselves and the created god that they have established within their proud hearts as the origin of all their religion. I prefer to go to history and find out about the reliable revelation there recorded. I demand that it be of such a nature as to differ from all man-made revelations. I demand that it have the clear stamp of the Divinity upon it. I want no shifting, vacillating God. I want no God who told the Mohammedan that he could have as many wives as he wished and who told the Catholic priest that he does best to live in chastity.

If God is not consistent, I want none of Him. He is not God if He is a liar.

I demand a religion that extends in an unbroken line from Paradise to the present. The line may improve, but the doctrines dare not substantially change, and if Christ is really

God, if His Apostles were really guided by the Holy Ghost, I demand that I be able to go to their deposit of faith for all the great beliefs on which I must rely and on which all men must rely until the end of time.

If history cannot prove to me that these truths were revealed, I want none of them. But if I can find absolute proof in history that God has made a revelation, I deem it my duty to accept that revelation. If I live in opposition to it, I expect damnation, for Christ has unequivocally warned me that this is all I dare expect.

You can have your "inner urgings." I demand something a little more substantial. I have not yet reached the stage where I can be satisfied with purely imaginary religion, any more than my stomach can be satisfied with imaginary meat.

You say that yours is the only "tolerant" stand. Let us understand each other on this word "tolerance." By religious tolerance I mean that if you are in good conscience in your errors, you have a right to follow that

conscience without my interference. But I do not mean that you have a moral right to do as you please, regardless of the demands of conscience. If you have any qualms about your position, if you are not in absolute good faith, you have the positive duty to investigate until you are satisfied. If you do not, you are going to hell. That is rather blunt, but it is the truth, because God said it: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." I admit your liberty to choose to go to hell if you wish. But I deny your right to blast the foundations of faith in order to try to make other people follow your foolishness. By tolerance, I do not mean giving a free reign to license. I do not mean the abandonment of truth in order to reduce myself to your level. I mean this, and nothing more: that you have a right to follow your conscience and that I have no right to force you to accept my religion, whether you are sincere or not.

What is Modernism? When, a few years ago, Pope Pius X condemned this movement,

the writer heard many Protestants declare: "The Catholic Church is up to her old tricks again, going against scientific research." They thought that Modernism meant merely a supplementing of supernatural truth by laboratory tests. And, inasmuch as they had imbibed the heritage of hatred against Rome, and firmly believed the silly old tradition that we are opposed to education despite the Catholic schools and learned priests they can see on all sides of them, they were only too ready to think that the Pope was determined to keep Catholics from studying, lest they might learn enough to make the Papacy a poor job.

Modernism is progressive only in its name. It is a retrogression in fact, for, in the shape in which it was first broadcast, it epitomized all the heresies that had preceded it, and laid down principles which would have put a stop to genuine scientific research. When man is not guided by the supernatural, he often makes a sorry mess of his science, as can be readily proved by reading some of the so-called scientific literature of the day. Modernism

really wished to throw out the supernatural.

The Modernists declared that there was no link between the natural and the supernatural. They said that natural science proceeded in an orbit of its own and revelation in an entirely different orbit. They denied that revealed religion has any scientific foundation and rested it entirely on the doctrine of immanence. This doctrine of immanence means that God works in us and speaks in our hearts, producing religious sentiments, to such an extent that faith does not have a scientific or historical motive, but is simply a sentimental conviction.

Now we acknowledge that faith is a Divine gift, but the Church also holds that there are scientific and historical motives of credibility. The Modernists explained the miracles of Christ by saying that Christ really or probably did not work them, but the Evangelists were inwardly convinced that He was God, and hence when writing of Him attributed these marvelous works to Him. For this reason, they argued, the Scriptures could not be adopted in the sense that Catholics had adopted

them. Faith is not, according to them, a rational assent to revealed truth, the assent being given because reasonable motives have established the authenticity of the sources of revelation; but it is an assent of the heart because the doctrines I get by immanent conviction appeal to my religious needs. To believe in the Real Presence, according to their way of arguing, would make me better; therefore I should believe in it. But that this doctrine could be established historically, they were not willing to admit.

While men like Alfred Loisy taught these doctrines, they claimed to be good Catholics. This unfortunate priest celebrated Mass daily. There are now many Protestant Modernists, but there are few in the Catholic fold, for the Church swatted this heresy with tremendous force, and by swatting it she proved what she has proved over and over again in her history—that she is the best friend scientific research has.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Some Biblical Difficulties

Your objections to the Biblical story of Noah's (or Noe's) ark and the flood show that you have not made a very deep investigation into this subject. Our knowledge of the flood is by no means confined to the Biblical account. Some reference has been found to it in the literature or folklore of practically every old nation so far investigated and the Assyrian account, discovered on 3,000-year-old tablets in the last century (now in the British museum), is startlingly like the Biblical one. The evidence is so strong that even scientists who want to have nothing to do with religion cannot doubt the deluge. Over sixty flood stories independent of the Hebrew and Assyrian accounts have been found. The Greek dramatist, Aristophanes, for instance, in "The

Clouds," has this line: "Dunce, dotard! were you born before the flood?" etc.

Whether the deluge was universal or not is a mooted question. Many Catholic scholars think that it was not. Moses spoke of its covering "all the earth," but the expression does not necessarily mean the entire globe. We have no difficulty confining the flood to that portion of the earth where men lived. The Bible speaks in a human fashion and general expressions, used there as among men ordinarily, may sometimes be intended not to be taken in an absolute sense. The word indicating what the water covered is better translated "land" than "world" or "earth" and hence can easily be given a limited sense.

Whether it is necessary to admit that the entire human race or only that a portion of it living for some distance around Noah was destroyed is another mooted question. It is better to hold that the entire race, with the exception of those in the ark, was destroyed. Not only the Bible but scientific and historic researches make this opinion by far the

stronger. But even so great a scholar as Cardinal Gonzales held that it is impossible, absolutely speaking, to decide which opinion is the more probable (See DeVivier's *Christian Apologetics,* Vol. 1, part 2, page 65). A. J. Maas, writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* ("Deluge") argues that we must hold that only the few in the ark were saved.

You have doubted whether Noah could build so large a ship as the ark was. You forget that he was a rich man and did not necessarily have to do all the work himself. The building business was marvelously advanced in early ages, as ruins still surviving show. To build the ark was probably not such an extraordinary feat after all. And remember that there was plenty of time for the job.

Actual computations also show that the ark could have easily held all the species of animals that exist even today, together with many more, as well as the food necessary for them. It has been computed that, with nine-tenths of the space left for the provisions, the ark left room for 7,000 species of animals, two to each

species. Inasmuch as the flood was perhaps not universal, it is by no means necessary to hold that every species of animals on the face of the earth was represented in the ark. It was sufficient to have a pair of each species found in the district covered by the flood.

You cannot understand, you say, how Noah could have gathered all the animals together. Inasmuch as you are a fool who will not admit that God can work miracles, it is perhaps useless to tell you that He who made the animals could very easily put an instinct in them to go of their own accord to the ark, just as the migratory birds go by instinct over long distances from zone to zone. Such an instinct need not have been miraculous. You wonder how it would have been possible for an animal indigenous to America to reach the ark in Asia. In the first place, as I am by no means sure that the flood was universal, I do not need to worry much about this problem; in the second place, you cannot prove to me that the continents were not then connected; and in the third place, admitting miracles, I can see no

reason at all to limit the power of God who made the animals and the seas and has absolute control over them. The Creator could arrange for their transportation without the slightest difficulty. Even though you might not wish to admit miracles, you can hardly deny that Noah, a wealthy man, would scarcely have had more trouble hiring men to gather his menagerie together than the owner of a modern circus. If I can pay the price, I can collect just as many animals as I wish. God could easily see that Noah got the price.

It can be readily admitted that, if God worked no miracle in providing water, enough rain could not fall within forty days to cover the entire face of the earth, and it can also be admitted that if the sea water and fresh water mixed, the fish indigenous to either would have been killed; but these problems no longer worry us if we do not consider the deluge as a universal calamity, and although it were, the God who made the world could handle the difficulties even without

miracles in a way that we might not be able readily to see. If miracles were necessary, He could work them. Good philosophers, however, tell us that "miracles are not to be multiplied without necessity." The Church is wary in branding events as miraculous.

Difficulties such as the development of different races after the deluge do not bother Christian scholars, for we are not able to place the date of the catastrophe. Religion does not tell us how long man has been on this earth. Computations such as you see in the Bible histories studied by children are purest guesswork. You are aware, I hope, that science is decidedly befuddled as to the cause of races. The theory that climatic conditions have brought them about is only an hypothesis. The oldest monuments in Egypt show several racial types exactly as we know them today. Six to ten thousand years have left the negro and the white man exactly as they were that long ago. Climate has not affected them. From this, it would not be illogical to argue

that perhaps the races were suddenly diversified. The question is a purely scientific one. Religion does not throw any light on the matter.

You have also informed me that it is ridiculous to hold that the world was created in six ordinary days, in view of the discoveries of modern science about its evolutionary development. Your ignorance is refreshing. Nobody at all holds that it was created in 144 hours. The "days" mean periods of any length or, as St. Augustine taught and as the writer himself holds, they may have been concepts in the angelic intellects, with no reference whatever to time or chronology.

You tell me that the Bible is off on its astronomy. I admit that it sometimes speaks in a human way. But every astronomer alive speaks of the setting and rising of the sun, just as you do; while all educated persons know well that the sun neither rises nor sets. There is not a statement about astronomy in the Scriptures that seems strange and that cannot be given as reasonable an explanation as this

one from everyday life. The Bible exists to teach religion, not astronomy.

You say that evolution has disproved the doctrine of creation. You do not seem aware of the fact that evolution is simply a theory and that even many scholars who accept it as to lower forms of life are by no means convinced by such proofs as have been advanced for the higher forms, particularly as to man. There has never yet been a single absolute proof advanced that one species has changed to another, either in higher or lower forms. Do not mistake scientific theories for scientific facts; I myself am an evolutionist as to everything on earth except man, yet I must admit that there are plenty of flaws in the scientific argument. The Biblical account of the creation of man seems to me to uphold the direct creation of both his body and soul; but nevertheless I think that if there were any absolute proof given of evolution as to man's body the Genesis account would stand the strain without difficulty. Scholars of old thought that they saw arguments in the Bible upholding

some of their off-color scientific theories. But we can see now that the texts by no means required such an explanation.

A book that can stand the test of as many ages as the Bible has, with never an overwhelming difficulty, must have more than human brains behind it. If you take the trouble to read, you will find that you are by no means original in the difficulties you allege. Thousands, millions before you have had the same problems; and every one of them has been satisfactorily answered long before you were born.

Your difficulties about Jonas and the whale might be valid if we knew that it was a whale which swallowed the prophet. If it was a whale, it seems that we must admit a miracle in the fact that Jonas could live within the fish and also a miracle in that the whale could swallow him. But how are you going to prove that no miracle occurred, and how would you answer me if I claimed that this particular whale might have been a freak? Freaks are rather common in all species of living things.

But the word used in the original where the adventure of Jonas is described need not be translated "whale." It is a term that may mean any large fish. There are types of sharks that attain such large proportions that they could swallow a man without injuring him. Some scientists, in fact, think that no miracle at all is necessary in the case. But God caused what happened, whether it was miraculous or not.[1]

[1] Some scholars think that it was a whale which swallowed Jonas. The difficulty presented by the fact that the Mediterranean was seemingly free of whales has been answered. The following, from *A Scripture Manual,* by Rev. John-Mary Simon, O. S. M., (Jos. F. Wagner, Inc., Publishers) gives the view of a modern Catholic scholar: "Popular language has designated this sea monster as a whale—and the presence of such an animal in the Mediterranean has been scoffed at as absurd. But Haupt ('As syrische Name des Potwals,' in *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures,* April, 1907, vol. 23, pp. 253–263, Chicago) concludes from etymological reasons that the sea beast of the Book of Jonas (which of course he considers fiction, and assigns to the Machabean period) was probably a cachalot or sperm whale, known to the Assyrians under the name of *nâxiru,* 'the blower or squirter.' Aššurnâçirpal records as a notable feat that Tiglathphilesar I (about 1100 B. C.) on a sea voyage off Arvad killed one of these beasts. In the mighty maw of a

The same is true as to your difficulty about the passage through the Red Sea by the Hebrews in their flight from Egypt. I believe and the Bible seems to me to indicate that this passage was miraculous, but it is a miracle of such a nature as perhaps could be brought about by a freak of the elements.

Your difficulty with the incident when the sun stood still for Josue is an example like the use of the terms rising sun and setting sun by people who know that the sun neither rises nor sets. The day was prolonged miraculously, and it looked as if the sun stood still, just as it looks as if it sets at evening tide. If the Bible had described the event in exact, scientific language, generations would have failed to understand it. We, who can now use such language, understand just as well what actually

cachalot a man could find room. Commentators propose the white shark, known to the Hollanders as the Jonas-Haay." (Page 359). With these facts, there is no need whatever to admit an allegorical interpretation of the story of Jonas. Christ's reference to Jonas as a figure of His own burial would seem to me to preclude such an interpretation.

happened, although it is described to us in the way an ordinary man, even today, would tell about it.

Some authorities now declare that the problem of Josue's miracle is due to faulty translation. It was not a case of the sun and moon standing still, but of their being obscured by heavy storm clouds, making the day like night. God, at Josue's prayer, brought on a great hail storm, to confound the enemy. The sun "hasted not to go down," being merely obscured by the clouds. The statement, "There was not before nor after *so long a day,*" becomes, by better translation, *"such a day."* See *A Scripture Manual,* pages 250 and 251, by Rev. John-Mary Simon, O. S. M. (J. F. Wagner, publisher).

Your difficulty with the statement in the Apocalypse, or Revelation, about the four angels who stood at the four corners of the earth, might prove to your carping mind that the Bible calls the earth flat, but I cannot see it that way. How can you refer to the direc-

tions North, East, West and South better than by mentioning four corners or four sides? I speak of the top and bottom of a ball without necessarily implying that they are flat. Use common sense.

CHAPTER NINE

The Christian Bible a Late Work?

Your statement that the Christian Bible was not written until a hundred and fifty years after Christ was a great deal easier to make than it would be to prove. With Strauss, Renan and other rationalists, you take it as a matter beyond dispute that a miracle cannot occur and that any reference to one is a Scriptural interpolation. My answer to this is that you cannot furnish me with a single philosophic proof that a miracle is impossible and, I say, the facts of history are against you. Remember that the age when miracles were written up in the Christian Bible was a time not at all behind the present in intellectuality, while skepticism was rampant and all the powers of both organized religion and the state were used to try to keep the people from accepting the faith of the Nazarene. Yet that faith,

miracles and all, triumphed, proof indeed that its argument was invulnerable. When we turn to the time of the establishment of Christianity, we are not dealing with a hazy prehistoric period when legend thrived. We are dealing with a world when things were just as matter-of-fact as in our own age. A mere denial that miracles can happen means nothing whatever to me. They have happened. Historical records, as authentic as anything that the past furnishes, show that they have happened, and if you visit Lourdes today you will find doctors examining patients before and after their visits to Mary's shrine and unable to explain the miracles that are happening now, in your time and mine. Rome goes right ahead, century after century, canonizing saints and demands and gets proofs of miracles for all save martyrs.

But how prove the Gospels apostolic? Ignatius, Polycarp and other writers who were personally taught by the Apostles or immediate disciples quote passages from the Gospels. Justin Martyr, about 150, speaks in such a

way of the Gospels that we know they were in common use and had been handed down from the Apostles. If they were in common, universal use, how could they be changed? Remember that these were books on whose teachings people were staking their salvation. To argue in favor of any great change in them is as foolish as the old-time Protestant argument that Confession was introduced centuries after Christ—as if such a thing were possible.

Let us examine the evidence of authenticity for some of the books of the New Testament. First, take the Gospel of St. Matthew. Papias (75–150) is quoted by Eusebius as saying that Matthew wrote a history of Christ in Hebrew. Irenæus (died in 202), a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Evangelist; as well as Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian tell us the same. The Didache (first century) contains quotations from the Sermon on the Mount and other teachings of Christ. Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin use the Gospel in their writings.

The Gospel of St. John is often attacked by rationalists, who say that it appeared in the latter half of the second century. They say that the Logos doctrine, with which it chiefly deals, was not developed until then. We are dependent on their infallible authority for this information, which we do not find at all convincing. But the works of Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias quote the Gospel. The Epistle to Diognetus, belonging probably to the first half of the second century, speaks of the Logos in a way similar to John's Gospel. Justin Martyr, speaking of the Logos, also shows a knowledge of the Gospel, and directly quotes the Gospel in his Apology. The Gnostic Basilides, writing about 120, refers to John i, 9: "The true light which enlighteneth every man," etc. Theophilus of Antioch (about 170–180) quotes the Gospel of John as a work long and universally recognized. While Irenæus, living about the same time, a disciple of Polycarp, who was in turn a disciple of John, says that John wrote his Gos-

pel while residing in Ephesus (Adv. Haer., III, 1, 1; II, xxii, 5; III, xi, 1).

It will be seen, therefore, that you and your other unbelieving friends have insuperable evidence against your stand. I have considered only two books. But there is convincing evidence for the acceptance of all the books. Any Catholic Scriptural commentary that you may wish to consult will give them to you. I have taken those above from Seisenberger's *Practical Handbook for the Study of the Bible,* where you can find fuller references if you wish, as well as data for the other books. You can see this work in many libraries or in many priests' houses.

There are unbelievers today who seem to have the idea that Christians swallow everything, hook, bait and line, without the slightest investigation. They see some half-baked Unitarian divine declaring, through a newspaper, that the Bible was written ages after Christ or interpolated, and accept this without question, forgetting that thousands of intelligent

people would hardly be living a religion of self-denial unless it could forward good credentials. They accept, without hesitation, the edicts of college professors who are notoriously one-sided and who do not take the trouble to investigate the other side. In other words, they wallow in ignorance and pretend, all the while, to be the mighty intellectuals of the age. If a man does not look into both sides of a question, he is not honest. And the only place I know of where both sides are honestly investigated is in the orthodox theological schools. Every argument of rationalist and heretic is there met and frankly dealt with. If the rationalists and other purveyors of falsehood indulged in this, they could not remain ignorant, except in occasional cases. And the causes of these occasional cases where men know the truth but do not accept it can be traced to immorality.

CHAPTER TEN

Ceremonies from Paganism

It is a favorite trick of the atheists to try to prove Christianity false by finding a great deal of parallelism between its practices and beliefs and those of ancient or modern pagan systems; hence it is not surprising to find you putting forth the argument. But if you expect me to apologize for the fact that the Church has preserved what she has found beautiful in the false religions of old, you will be mistaken. It is vastly to the credit of the Catholic Church that she has not destroyed what was fine in the ancient civilizations. What does it matter if a few of her statues are based on images of ancient gods? What has she lost by copying the architecture of the pagans and improving upon it? She has shown that she can appreciate what is beautiful, even when she did not originate it.

If you go into her churches today, you can hear "Lead Kindly Light" sung, although when John Henry Newman wrote it he was an Episcopalian; you can hear "Onward Christian Soldiers" sung by the Knights of Columbus in their lodge work, although it is one of the favorite Protestant hymns; you can hear our children and others singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," although the wife of a Unitarian minister wrote it. Because they are beautiful, these and other hymns have found their way into our hymnals, and have won approval. Our own church music is so far above the Protestant that this happens only occasionally, but we borrow unblushingly when devotion and art are promoted by the fact.

The Catholic Church, like all real lovers of learning, frankly admits that she is a good thief of the beautiful. She casts her eyes over the art of the world and without hesitation adopts it when it will help her. She gives credit where credit is due, and hence is not a plagiarist.

Our liturgy—the greatest drama man has known—is built on the glory of the past, made more glorious by the faith that surges through it. The Jewish temple and synagogue, as well as the pagan temples, have contributed their share to the adornment of the ceremonies. We boast about the fact. Atheists who tell us with triumph that they have discovered our "thefts" are telling us what we know full well. Our textbooks will show them just where we found what we use.

But you go too far when you say that Catholics and the ancient Jews stole dogmas as well as rites from paganism. Your assertion that nothing like an angel was ever heard of before the Babylonian captivity of the Jews is distressingly ignorant. Read the Old Testament. Your claim that our idea of holy water is purely pagan is also a painful admission on your part. I again refer you to the Old Testament. Your claim that our priests' vestments, our use of incense, etc., are wholly pagan, shows you have never paid much attention to

the Old Testament.[1] Your assertion that all our statues were taken from pagan Rome proves that you have never read about those golden cherubim that, at the command of God, were placed over the ark of the covenant. It is true that the Jews were, as a rule, forbidden to use images. But so long as any at all were permitted, the principle was acknowledged, and the reason why statues were not common was because men in olden times were too prone to adore the work of their own hands.

Your allegation of parallel doctrines between Christianity and some pagan systems proves nothing against us. Kindly remember that this parallelism proves our contention of one original religion. God made certain revelations to the patriarchal age, and in the beginning there was but one religion. False teachers arose later and, as often happens, found large followings. But false religions always contain many elements of the

[1] As for angels, see Genesis XIX, etc. As for holy water, see Numbers XIX, etc. As for incense, see Exodus XXXVII, etc. As for vestments, see Exodus XXXIX, etc.

truth that has been taught before them, and it is not surprising to find many references in the literature and art of paganism to beliefs somewhat similar to ours. The expectation of a Redeemer was universal, and it does not surprise us in the least to find remote suggestions of a virgin birth or even of a crucifixion in certain pagan authors. They had both the original revelation and the wonderfully rich literature of the Hebrews to draw from. If you think that there was no communication whatever between the ancient civilizations, you have not read history very thoroughly.

What if the Jews did draw some of their ceremonials from pagan neighbors? There was nothing wrong with this, so long as they purified the ceremonies. What if they did take some of their religious expressions? If an Episcopalian Bishop would use a term that happily summed up some Christian doctrine, do you seriously think that we would hesitate to use it after him today? We took our philosophy from Aristotle, and he was neither a Christian nor a Jew. But we purified it.

Only false religions deem themselves so wise that they refuse to benefit by the wisdom of all other men. The same God who gave men brains gave us our religion, so we do not despise the work of others, whether they agree with us on all things or not. However, you will find more original work in Catholic art and rites and music than you will of borrowed glory. Can any Protestant sect say as much?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

What About Hell?

You tell me that you cannot conceive of a Supreme Being so cruel as to condemn creatures to an everlasting hell, and you say that the plan of forcing people into goodness by threats of eternal or even temporal punishment disgusts you. Hell, you say, is a belief that is not held today by any thinking person.

I beg to disagree with you. All Catholics believe in an eternal hell, and large numbers of Protestants. The fact that you and a number of others refuse to accept it has no effect at all on its existence. You dare me to prove that it exists. I do this by calling attention to the many references to it in the Scriptures and the Tradition of the Catholic Church. Christ is God; He said that it existed; and He ought to know.

It is just as hard for me as for you to think

of spending an eternity in torment. But I do not expect to do so and I am living as a Catholic in order to avoid such a calamity.

Insofar as the old-fashionedness of preaching hell fire in order to induce morality is concerned, your argument does not sway me. It is never old-fashioned to tell the truth. If hell does not exist, Christ was a liar; if Christ was a liar, so is God, because historic documents better substantiated than any other human records convince me that He worked tremendous miracles in proof of His statements, and a miracle cannot be effected by any other power than God's. Of course this line of reasoning will not appeal to you, as you have admitted to me that you do not believe in miracles. You have, however, not sent me any proof—philosophical, historical or otherwise—that miracles have not occurred. Your denial of them is puerile. They are an historic fact.

You say that you cannot conceive of a just God eternally punishing anyone. The problem offers few difficulties to me, and I claim to be at least as intelligent as you are. I know

that God condemns no one to eternal torment unless that person has made a deliberate choice of creatures rather than of Him. The sinner must be guilty of grave sin, have been wholly conscious of what he was doing, and have given his full consent to the act, before it was possible for the sin to be one sufficient to damn him to eternal pain. If he commits a sin even of this kind, he still has the chance to be saved by turning to God. Even a moment's perfect contrition—i. e., sorrow for having offended God because He is so good and worthy of all love—will save the sinner. If the wretch refuses to repent, since his nature is such that once the soul is separated from the body it becomes confirmed in the state of mind that exists at the time of that separation, I can see no injustice of any kind if the sinner is damned. Nobody goes to eternal torment without deliberately choosing that state himself.

I am afraid that you are like a prominent man of my acquaintance who some years ago hotly attacked a priest for preaching about hell. That man was a whore-monger. No

wonder he did not enjoy the thought of hell.

A great French priest, to whose sermons the atheists of Paris used to flock, declared to them that if they would remain pure for a year he would answer to God for their souls. He knew wherein their lack of faith lay. Examine yourself: you may be relegating hell to the backwoods because your life is such as to make it too unpleasant to contemplate. There is no such thing as a sincere atheist, and you cannot claim to be one.

But why is there a hell?

God is necessarily perfect. Perfection demands order. The only way to keep order in any city, even the City of God, is to punish the recalcitrant. If New York allowed everybody to do exactly as he pleased, if it permitted every robber to go about his burglary unmolested and every murderer to shoot whomever he wished, the city could hardly last. If heaven were to be composed of all sorts of clashing minds, with exactly the same reign of wickedness that mars this earth, and with all the scoundrels of all the ages running loose,

free to do as they wished, it would hardly be heaven. It would be hell. Let those who wish to raise hell go to hell. It is the place prepared for them.

You say that you want "order." Yet you fight it. You strangely argue that the reason why you want to abolish the Church is to get rid of the clergy, "in order to bring more order into the world." Like an anarchist, you want to get happiness by destroying all the little happiness there is in this life. Well, in this line of argument you are quite too deep for me. Being sane, I never could follow the ramblings of anarchy.

There is going to be order, whether or not you want to destroy it to get the diseased imitation of it that you imagine will be set up in its place. The fact that there is so little of it in the world now is due to one condition only —sin. Man rebelled against God, and insofar as he continues this fight there is less and less order. Because he has been so depraved by sin, there is no chance of getting complete order in the present life. But the fact that

human reason alone postulates the eternity of the soul, and the fact that there is so little justice in the present life, should lead you, as it does others, to see a demand in the present state of affairs for some arrangement that will even things up after our term of probation.

I have told you that order is necessary to God. The reason of this is that He is all beauty, all perfection, and beauty and perfection cannot exist without order. He has everything that could possibly be needed for infinite happiness in Himself, and, as He can be dependent on nothing outside Himself, the only reason why He could create anything would be because of Himself. He created you and me for His own eternal honor and glory, and intended us to be happy in eternity contemplating Him. But inasmuch as we are intellectual beings, He justly demanded that we earn the right to enjoy Him. He demands service of us, with acknowledgment of His perfection and of the fact that He, not something created, is our last end. If we give that service, we will be saved. If we do not, it

is not His fault that we are lost. But order will prevail, and if we are not going to line up of our own wills, He will compel us to do so, just as a policeman, who lets an orderly citizen alone, arrests a disorderly one. If order cannot be brought about willingly, it can be brought by force. You and I have our choice. We can be good citizens of His kingdom willingly, or we will be handled in such a way as to be compelled to acknowledge Him even though we may be unwilling.

And history proves that the only thing that will keep men straight is the fear of eternal punishment. It is easy enough to say that thoughts of honor, etc., will do so, but you will have a difficult time proving this.

Do not take chances. It will be a most disastrous thing to live as if there were no hell, then to awaken in one after death.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Religion and Science

You repeat the hoary charge that religion and science cannot agree. The Modernists of today, like some noted sophists of the past, declare that it is not possible to be scientific and dogmatic, and often use the explanation that religion and science move in entirely different spheres, making any attempt to explain one with the other futile.

The Catholic, on the other hand, remembers that the God of the natural is the same God as the God of the supernatural, and that supernature presupposes nature. As the one God made both, and revelation clearly shows a union between them, conflict is impossible.

When you hear a man declaring that religion and science are at loggerheads, make sure that he knows something of both. There are many college professors nowadays who know

their science but are utterly ignorant of religion, and inasmuch as some of the Protestant denominations still ordain men without even so much as a high school course, it must be admitted that there are many sectarian clergymen who know nothing about science. The conflict in these cases between religion and science resolves itself into a mere chimera. It is serious enough in the mind of the person, but its existence is purely subjective.

It can be emphatically stated that there is absolutely no conflict between science and Catholicity. If a single absolute law of science were found to be in conflict with a single defined dogma, the Catholic religion would, of course, fall. Catholicism is such that our faith must embrace the whole or not any of it. Like a dirt dam, if a single trickle of water found its way over the breast, the dam would be destroyed.

I have no doubt in the world that among three hundred million people, with a rather considerable number of them making their living through working for religion, you might be

able to find some who would shiver every now and then for fear that some such discovery, wrecking the whole edifice, might be made. But, frankly, I have never met any. I have known hundreds of Catholic priests and thousands of laymen, but I have never known any who was in the least opposed to scientific research. We are so sure of our ground that we urge research on, feeling as supremely confident of the results as the Popes were when they permitted the exploration of the catacombs, feeling positive that the evidence uncovered would be good Catholic apologetics. If there is anything that we need never fear, it is genuine science.

We have fear, however, of the pseudo-scientist. The laboratorian who treats mere hypotheses as if they were firmly established laws, and who is more dogmatic than the most dogmatic of dogmatists in his public assertions, is a menace to both religion and science. I have seen interviews and articles on the subject of evolution, for instance, in which the emphatic claim was made that incontrovertible

evidence had been advanced for evolution of all living things, man included. Now the fact is,—if you will take the time to investigate, —that evolution, while it has much in its favor, is still a theory. If we could get laboratory evidence of the change from one living species to another, we would be getting somewhere towards absolute law. But far from having proved the ascent of men from lower forms to higher, there is, as yet, no absolute proof of the change even of much lower forms from one to another living species. Strong probability is not absolute proof. No scientist on earth would dare to deny this. But the pseudo-scientist will tell the newspaper reporters that the question is altogether settled. Inasmuch as he holds the scientific pose, and the public is not any too discerning, he can often get by. The real man of science, like the trained clergyman, soon finds by experience that it is simply impossible to check up every impostor and liar. We have to tolerate them. And these fakers always carry evolution to the point where they deny a personal God.

On the other hand, men sometimes try to defend defenseless religious arguments against scientific attacks. A specific case might be instanced. In a southern city, about two years ago, a Unitarian preacher was scheduled to give a talk on evolution before a public forum. He was well coached on all the arguments of the liberals and was a good speaker. A row of Protestant ministers sat near the stage, and after the lecture started to question him. He bowled them over, one after the other, like ten-pins. They were good men, but poorly educated. Now I do not wish to be understood as saying that all Protestant ministers are uneducated, but it is an admitted fact that even some large denominations, like the Methodist Episcopal, have a lamentably large number of preachers with less than a college education, and many with less than a high school course, according to their own official statistics.[1] In

[1] "Of living Methodist ministers, 36 per cent had both theological and college education; 37 per cent had one but not both; 27 per cent had neither. 'Disturbing and distressing,' say Methodist leaders.—*'Time,'* New York, March 3, 1924.

"God help us, yes! Of the Catholic clergy, 100 per cent

the case I am citing, the men represented various denominations, and were nothing but putty in the hands of the liberal.

You may not be aware that the average Catholic priest has been in school long enough to have deserved the Ph. D. degree if he were studying in a state institution. He cannot be ordained, in fact, with less training, except by special dispensation. When you meet a priest who is above the ordinary, therefore, you have a wonderfully schooled man. In the balcony, on the occasion I am describing, two priests were sitting. One was a university president, the other a seminary teacher. After the ministers had met utter defeat, and the crowd was enthusiastically applauding the liberal, one of the priests arose. Within five minutes, he utterly confounded the liberal. The crowd turned completely around in its applause.

As the throng was leaving the theater, the ministers came up to congratulate the priest.

"The trouble with you is," he said truthfully

have had both a classical and theological training. Yet we are the Church that 'opposes education!' "—Editorial, *Denver Catholic Register*.

to them, "you are not well enough coached in Christianity to realize where it does and where it does not need defense. That orator was creating straw men, with your unwitting aid, and then destroying them."

And what he says is true. You have never heard of a convention of Catholic priests going on record, like some sectarian conventions in recent years, against all teaching of evolution. Remembering the fact that St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church were, in some sense, evolutionists, this alone would make us conservative. And furthermore, if the theory is not carried to extremes that relegate God and man's dignity off the stage, the system is not only tenable but most probable.

All of the seeming conflict between science and religion will vanish if loud-mouthed pseudo- or even real scientists who claim that there is a battle between them take the trouble to study something about Catholicity. If you do not believe this, look up the *Catholic Encyclopedia* or any other standard work and see how many eminent scientists have been good

members of the Catholic Church. We stand second to nobody in our array of them.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof." If the giants of science can be good Catholics, if great Catholic colleges, like those of the Jesuits, can be notable for their scientific departments, there is surely no conflict.

And remember this, if any Catholic, priest or layman, should ever oppose scientific research, he is altogether out of step with Catholic thought. For proof of this, consult the writings of Dr. James J. Walsh.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Faith Not Forced on Us

Your demand that religion offer such proofs as to make all doubt absolutely impossible shows that you have missed our fundamental concept that the purpose why man is on this earth is to undergo a probation. If men were forced into heaven, there would be no probation. We are here to serve, and we must serve by faith as well as by works. The Catholic religion can offer such proofs as to remove all reasonable doubt from the human mind, but it does not remove every unreasonable doubt. Room must be left for faith, and faith is the acceptance of revealed truth on the authority of God revealing. It is an acceptance of something on authority; an "evidence," as St. Paul defined it, "of things unseen," not of what we can prove beyond chance of carping. If we take two marbles and add two more to the collec-

tion, we are so positive that there are now four that we cannot have the least doubt about it. Anybody who would argue against this would be looked upon either as a liar or insane. Nobody would pay the slightest attention to him. We do not claim that the proofs of religion are as absolutely convincing as this. If there were not a chance for a mistake, where would the merit come from believing? Yet we must serve by faith.[1]

To adopt such religious ideals as those of Thomas Paine or other noted agnostics, atheists and Deists, is to show that you have missed seeing one of the underlying principles of all religion. The reason why we have religion is to serve God, and not only revelation, but

[1] While faith is less clear than the principles of natural science that are intrinsically evident, and in respect to the exclusion of doubt cannot be said to be more certain than all natural knowledge, nevertheless in its infallibility or necessary connection with objective verity it is more certain than all natural knowledge. This greater certainty arises from the fact that God cannot lie. A person might be individually mistaken in thinking that a thing was of faith when it was not. But his adherence to it would be only natural assent, not Divine faith.

reason, postulates that man should serve in his whole self, not only with the senses, but with the intellect and will. Service implies humility, and if we never humble the intellect, how can we serve with it? Faith would seem, therefore, to be demanded by reason alone.

Your difficulty with the fact that a large part of the world is not yet Christian, and a large part of it that is does not recognize the claims of the Catholic Church, also shows that you do not understand the nature of Divine faith.

Faith implies something on our part and something on God's. We could not believe in such a way as is necessary for supernatural merit unless we had the grace of God. But this grace is withheld from some men as a punishment for sin.

If you study the Old Testament, you will find that it was prophesied time and again that the long-expected Messias of the Jews would come and be rejected by these people, because they were stiff-necked and adulterous. Although they were reading the Scriptures constantly, and had this warning before them in the plain-

est language, the Jews of Christ's own time did reject Him. He told them why God had closed their ears—i. e., had withheld the necessary grace—and St. Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, as we know from the Acts, also warned the Jews that it was because of their sins that faith was not given to them. No fact in the Bible is plainer than this, although it is hardly even noticed except by the Catholics.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that many living in the world today are denied the gift of faith. True it is that there may be some innocent victims, in this way, of their parents' sins. But we must remember that God is just, and that if a person is in good conscience and dies without serious sin or with perfect contrition for mortal sin, he can be saved, even though he does not outwardly belong to the Catholic Church. A person who has led a good Catholic life will undoubtedly go considerably higher in heaven than such a person. But the rewards of heaven are far beyond anything we deserve, and God works no more injustice in establishing different

grades of eternal happiness than He does in making the violet less regal than the lily.

You complain that there are many difficulties in the Bible, and that revelation seems contradictory to you. Kindly remember that God has put us here on test. Obviously then we must expect difficulties. If faith were too easy, what would be the merit in believing? We have to meet many difficulties in keeping pure of mind and body and in the other service that we are bound to render Him. So you must expect them in the field of faith as well. And let him who does not think that it is necessary to have faith, so long as he serves in other ways, remember the warning of Christ to unbelieving cities that it would be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for Sodom and Gomorrha than for them, because of their refusal to believe. He plainly taught that lack of faith was a more serious offense than depraved sins against the flesh.[1]

As to difficulties in the Bible, however, remember that they are not as serious as your

[1] Matthew X, 15.

atheistic authorities would have one believe. Great Christian scholars have been giving the most serious attention to this book for nearly 2,000 years, and nobody but an ignorant person would dare to accuse them of lack of perception or intelligence. But the supposed difficulties have all been explainable to their satisfaction. It takes study to settle many of them. But God intended things to be this way. Our scholars, greater than yours, cannot find a single contradiction in Catholicity. No other Christian denomination, however, can make such a claim.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Can the True Church be Found?

You allege that, admitting the existence of a true religion, it is impossible to discover which one it is. My reply to this is that it is not impossible, but rather easy, for any one who uses logic and puts aside inherited prejudice. So far as Christianity is concerned, a man who was absolutely sincere in a desire to arrive at Christian truth would hardly fail to examine Catholicity, unless he were kept from this by inherited prejudice, as many are. It can be said without the slightest fear of contradiction that if any one who believes in Christ tries to set aside prejudice and makes a thorough examination of Catholicity his conversion is inevitable, provided he is living a moral life. We include this proviso about morality because Christianity is a supernatural religion and can be accepted by nobody without God's grace,

which is often withheld from the unworthy, although sometimes even the vilest sinners are overwhelmed by it. Catholicity is the most logical of religions; it is not mere emotionalism, but will stand the most rigorous test of correct reasoning; nevertheless, grace is required for it, as Christ plainly taught.

As for the religions outside Christianity, there are few which might be seriously considered. Let us examine two of them—Mohammedanism and Buddhism. What we find obnoxious in them we could find in all others. It is easily conceivable that a man who has been reared as a Mohammedan or a Buddhist might be sincere in adhering to these creeds, but merely to state their claims is enough to convince a non-believer that prejudice or custom, not reason, is the motive for their continued existence. Buddhism, founded perhaps six centuries before Christ, teaches that all beings are essentially equal and all are perpetually changed, but there is an immutable law which demands reward for the good and punishment for the bad. The highest reward

Buddhism offers man is eventual extinction or nirvana, to which he is expected to work by suppression of his desires. Celibacy and poverty are prescribed for the so-called monks and nuns, and thieving, lying, gluttony, murder and adultery are forbidden to all. So far as celibacy is concerned, it is not much wonder that it recommends itself, for there is much natural attraction to it among religious minds except when one has been deliberately reared to hate it. And those who hate it allow their prejudice to flood their reason. Buddhism, however, has one very serious defect—it teaches nothing about God! It is religion with God left out. Furthermore, it can offer no proof of miracles to show that it is Divine, and, as Father Tanquerey points out in his *Synopsis Theologiæ Dogmaticæ,* they would prove nothing if it could produce them, because it tells nothing about God. Buddhism, furthermore, is unphilosophical in the fact that it really destroys the immortality of the soul, a fact which we can prove by reason just as readily as by revelation. It is hopelessly

divided into sects, and there is no way of finding the real Buddhism. Christianity is divided, but any one can find the true brand simply by studying that Church which every scholar admits is the original stock.

There are some good things in Buddhism. But this is not marvelous. All men have reason and can use their brains. The natural law is written on every heart. Furthermore, these people had great truths handed down to them from their ancestors, who, if we go back far enough, certainly knew the truth.

Mohammedanism teaches Monotheism, but denies the Trinity. It tells about the angels, and also the prophets, but declares Mohammed the greatest of these latter. It has a Bible of its own called the Koran, but this was written by the immediate followers of the prophet, as Mohammed himself was illiterate. It teaches the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, but its view of heaven is altogether carnal and hence will not fit in with the scientific proofs of the spirituality of the soul. It is fatalistic. Alms-giving, ablu-

tions, circumcision, abstention from intoxicants, fasting and prayers are prescribed, but polygamy and divorce are permitted, together with slavery of infidels. "Holy war" is highly recommended.

Our answer to Mohammed is that a prophet as great as he claimed to be should show credentials. But neither fulfillment of prophecy nor miracles can be brought forth to prove his assertions. The rapid spread of his religion is not an argument in its favor as it is for Christianity, because Christianity spread despite fearful persecution and in spite of making a pleasure-mad world deny itself, while Mohammed spread his doctrines by means of the sword. You can spread Bolshevism, air-tight Capitalism, Czarism or any other 'ism you please, if you have a big enough army.

Furthermore, it would not be difficult to get men to keep from intoxicants or to give occasional alms to the poor, etc., if you assured them that they could go to the limit with impurity and still attain heaven. Catholicity would spread like wild-fire if it let down the

bars on the sixth commandment and abrogated its strict marriage laws.

Again, Mohammedanism is divided into innumerable sects. Here too there is no possibility of finding the true religion, as there is in Christianity. If any reader does not believe that there is a Christian denomination which does not leave any room for reasonable doubt, let him study Catholicity and be convinced.

That religion, and only that religion, is true which can trace itself in an unbroken line from the beginning of the human race to the present. God would be a monster if He created generations for the deliberate purpose of damning them, and this would be exactly what He would have done if He had permitted generations to live without any chance of learning the truth and then had suddenly foisted the real religion on the world through some unannounced prophet, utterly lacking in credentials. If you study Catholicity, you will find that it is a logical development of that religion announced to Adam and Eve immediately after

the fall and prepared for through countless centuries. There is no other creed that will stand this test. And there is no other religion which exactly suits all nationalities, regardless of whether they are the cold-blooded inhabitants of the north, the warm-blooded southerners, the savage redskin or the over-educated man of science. It is the only church that can go everywhere and succeed in missionary work. All others can get a few converts, wherever they work; but it has gone through the ages, steadily converting nation after nation, and it is keeping up this work in our day, for instance in China, where its present advances are phenomenal.

We frankly admit that there are adherents of false religions who are living in good faith. But we believe that they are saved, if they do their best and die either without serious sin or contrite. They go into heaven as Catholics. They belonged to the soul of our Church, even though they did not belong to her body.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Why Accept Christ?

You ask how, admitting that there is a God, we can prove that Jesus Christ is His Son and therefore entitled above all others to found a Church. We do this by calling attention to His miracles, performed, as He claimed Himself, to prove the truth of His doctrines; to His fulfillment of a long line of prophecies, and to the sublimity of His doctrine, which made Him easily the most conspicuous character in history and which has been of such a nature that no one has ever succeeded in getting public approbation for a derision of Him. Men have twisted His doctrines but they cannot ignore Him.

Your assertion that our record of His miracles was written into the Scriptures long after He died, and is therefore unreliable, will

not stand the test of history. Your atheistic authorities have tried in vain to prove that the New Testament is a late production. Our scholars have outshone them at every turn. The Book was written by Christ's personal students, or by personal students of the Apostles, under God's inspiration. And always remember that Christianity was not foisted on the world at a time when fables were popular. Paganism was breaking down, men were skeptical, and a new religion had to prove itself to gain adherence. The Romans made many references to Christianity, but the best they could do at explaining away the miracles performed in proof of it was to brand them as "magic."

Such fables as encrusted the old mythology of paganism were born, not in highly civilized times, but when learning was young and the people were easily deluded. Christianity came under far different auspices.

And the doctrines of Christ spread with amazing rapidity. They had penetrated to all

parts of the empire by the time the Apostles died.

In our own day, every new religion has to run the gamut of unfriendly literature. Where there is fraud, it is sure to be detected. If you want the inside story of Christian Science, Mormonism or any other religion that has arisen in modern times, you can get it, and although all these cults attract numerous followers, they cannot get over the stumbling blocks of exposes by skeptics, and hence their influence is very limited.

Christianity, too, came in a learned age. Printing had not yet been discovered, and it was harder than now to disseminate literature, but authors and books were numerous, and men wrote for the love of writing, even though the large financial returns of authorship such as are enjoyed by the better writers of today were unknown. Yet we search in vain for a single valid argument against Christianity, its miracles or its fulfillment of prophecies in the works of the pagans. There is no such in-

dictment of it to be found as Attorney Peabody's book on Mary Baker Eddy or M. R. Werner's history of Brigham Young and Mormonism.

If there were any way at all of proving Christ a fraud, it would have been done in His own time or since. Men have delved into everything they could get their hands on concerning Him. Friends and enemies have done their best to find every scrap that has been written about Him. But the fact stands that He came claiming to be God, worked mighty wonders in proof of that claim, and converted a world that would have far rather gone ahead serving the flesh and the devil.

The most effective argument in favor of the fact that Jesus Christ proved Himself what He claimed to be can be found in the testimony of the Apostles. They were outdoor men, a rather ignorant lot to begin with, the last people on earth whom a genuine student of human nature would expect to suffer from hallucinations. There is not the least question about the historic fact that these men were

uneducated, to start with. And yet, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, they went forth and organized the greatest movement in history, a Church that turned the entire tide of human affairs. They left a series of writings that equal, to say the least, anything in profane literature. Yet they had been nobodies.

And after Christ's death, while these Apostles were forming His Church, a certain Saul of Tarsus appeared on the scene. He caused the first great persecution of Christianity, and many were put to death as a result of his agitation. Then, in the very midst of this persecution, he saw a vision and was converted, and became Paul, the most zealous of all the Apostles. He was the only educated man in that sacred college, but without studying under the other Apostles he secured a most intimate knowledge of Christian theology. He was the first great philosopher of organized Christianity.

Paul, in time, went to his death in testimony of his teachings, after a bitterly hard life. And every other Apostle of that infant Church

suffered martyrdom. St. John's ordeal did not kill him; but he was cast into boiling oil and was saved by a miracle.

These are historic events that you would be a fool to deny. They happened in an age that did not have the mechanical contrivances but which was as cultured in some ways as our own. The records of all these occurrences are such that no historian of reputation would dare to deny them. And the Apostles stand unique in all history as founders of a new religion who deliberately chose death rather than surrender the doctrines which they taught. A few false prophets, like Joseph Smith, the Mormon, are called martyrs. But while they were killed for their claims, theirs was not a case of deliberately choosing death rather than to surrender. Death came unexpectedly or unwillingly.

The followers of false religions are often fanatical enough to die for them. But the founders, never, if there is a choice between life and death here and now threatening.

You might find some obscure authors scoff-

ing at the story of the Apostles. You can find some even denying that there was such an historic figure as Christ. The evidence, however, of His having lived and taught is so overwhelming that I must classify these authors with the yokel who looked at the giraffe and denied that there was any such animal.

Do not forget that the reason why so many flaws are found with the records of Christianity by a certain class of authors is because to accept the doctrines of Christ would mean that they must revise their lives. If we could let down the bars as Mohammed did on questions of sex, the spread of the Catholic religion would be far quicker. But a Christian has the responsibility to live right. And that is why men catch at straws to try to overthrow the Master's work.

Christ was true God and true man. He claimed both these natures and proved His claim by fulfilling the prophecies about Himself and by working miracles in His own name, both of which could be effected only by God.

The prophets foretold the time of Christ's

coming, the circumstances of His birth, life, passion and death; His resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; the destruction of Jerusalem, the rejection of the Jews and the conversion of the Gentiles; the founding, spreading and duration of His Church. Daniel showed that not quite seventy weeks of years should elapse from the command for the rebuilding of Jerusalem until Christ's death; Jacob, that the scepter would pass away from Juda when Christ was to come (it was in the hands of Herod); it was foretold that Jesus would be born of a virgin, of the tribe of Juda and family of David, and that kings from distant countries would come to adore Him; that He would work miracles, have great charity, be meek, enter Jerusalem on an ass; that He would be sold for thirty pieces of silver; be struck, have His hair pulled out, be spat upon, be given gall and vinegar, have His hands and feet pierced, have lots cast for His garments, be mocked; that He would be a man of sorrows, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people; that His sepulcher

would be glorious, that He would not see corruption and would mount to the heaven of heavens; that, after the slaying of the Messiah, a people would come with their leader and destroy Jerusalem and the Temple; that the Jews would be dispersed among the nations but would not disappear, and a remnant would be converted by God, not through their own merit, but to show His power; that there would be a new sacrifice and a new priesthood, and that the sacrifice would be offered from the rising to the setting of the sun (which is fulfilled in the Catholic Mass, which is going on every moment of time somewhere); that all nations of the earth would be blessed in Him and that His Church would stand forever.

You will find these prophecies scattered everywhere in the Old Testament, particularly in Daniel, Isaias, Micheas, the Psalms, Zacharias, Joel, Malachias, Jeremias, etc.

It is plainly set forth that the Messiah is to be the Lord of the universe. The Psalms and other books address Him in a manner due to God alone. The Jews were not very clear

on the point, but knew that He was not to be simply human. Jesus Christ is called Lord as God, because, being equal to the Father and one in nature with Him, He is the Lord and creator of heaven and earth; as man because, having offered Himself up for us and the sacrifice having been accepted by God, He purchased us and we belong to Him, and also because He will judge us as man and will rule as our King and Head through all eternity.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Miracles of History

In my letters to you, we have gone over a large part of what Catholic theologians call "apologetics" or "Christian evidences," the underlying proofs from reason for the acceptance of Christian revelation as Divine. Let us close the discussion by calling your attention to some of the proofs from history for the fact that the Catholic Church is just what she claims to be—God's only authorized agency for dispensing religion to men.

First, for a proof from history that Christ was Divinely sent, consider the fulfillment of prophecies made by Him. These were real prophecies, not records made after the events. If you study the history of the New Testament, you will be compelled to concede that those critics who have attempted to prove it a late work have

not succeeded. Their books look plausible to persons who have read only one side of the controversy. But every fact that they have brought forth has been frankly met by Catholic scholars, who, it must be admitted, have outdone them. This being a fact, it must be acknowledged that Jesus Christ made a startling prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the banishment of the Jewish nation, and the terrible fulfillment of that warning proves Him Divine. No war in history brought greater suffering than the siege by Titus, the Roman, of Jerusalem, and no prophecy ever made by any one long before an event had a more literal fulfillment than Christ's statement that the Temple would be destroyed, and not a stone left upon a stone. What the soldiers of Titus did not ruin of the Temple, the workingmen of the emperor Julian the Apostate did, when that ex-Christian was trying to clear away the ground to rebuild the Temple, and balls of fire came from the earth and chased the workers away. You do not have to go to Christian authorities to prove

this story of the balls of fire. You can get information from purely pagan documents. Even the unbeliever Gibbon, in his history of the Roman empire, was forced to concede the occurrence. Incidentally, he made an ass of himself trying to explain it away.

Had Christianity nothing more on which to base itself than the fulfillment of prophecies about the Jews, recorded in both the Old and the New Testaments, this fact would be sufficient to demand investigation of its claims. When it had been told over and over again that this nation would do exactly what it did, reject its great expected leader, persecute Him, and then be made outcasts because of this, certainly more than human ingenuity has been involved in such prophecies.

But the great miracle of the unity and indefectibility of the Catholic Church also demands attention. We have a Church composed of all kinds of nationalities and personalities. It contains everything from two million Chinamen to millions of Poles, Irish, Germans, French, Mexicans, and everything

else you can think of. A more polyglot association has never adorned the earth. It has existed under all sorts of conditions, from the very highest civilization to little more than savagery. Yet every one of these people has agreed on a fundamental set of dogmas. It represents the one attempt in history at universality of belief. And it has succeeded.

Not only is it succeeding today, but it has succeeded for nearly 2,000 years. It has had Popes of every type. Many have been great saints, and a few have been bad men. Some have been weaklings, others have been among the strongest characters history has shown. Some have been mighty in scholarship, and some, no doubt, have been like many of the educated men of our own day—well schooled, but little learned. Yet you can search in vain for contradictions in the teachings of these Popes. There are a few incidents that need explanation. But the explanation can be given. The argument can be settled. Straddling and inconsistency are not dragged in to save the day, as in man-made religions.

If you study the history of the general councils, you will find records that prove what the Church has survived. Here indeed is proof of the jarring personalities that must be expected in a universal Church. Chicanery, open hate, politics—these things entered in sometimes, as our historians admit. Yet here again you will search in vain for a single contradiction in doctrinal teaching, whenever the conditions officially set forth for determining when the Church is infallibly teaching are met.

Christ never promised that His Church would fail to suffer from the machinations of weak and sinful men. He promised one thing only about her lack of defection, and that was that she would never lose the truth He taught. You can, therefore, find the path of the sinner all through her history. But you can also find the truth shining forth from her doctrine, with all the brilliance of a beacon light. In every age, despite the fact that for a long period before the Reformation there was a constant cry for "reform in the head and members" of the

Church, you will find unusual holiness conspicuous in a large part of her clergy and laity, especially in her saints. We deny, without the least fear of contradiction, that this can be said of any sect. If any one believes it of Protestantism, we refer him to the fact that Protestantism, accepting all our saints of pre-Reformation days, has not dared to raise another leader to this dignity.

We call attention to the historic fact, easily proved, that just so long as people stay in union with the Pope they keep faith intact, but just as soon as they separate from him, even though it be merely with the intention of forming a schism, not a heresy, that faith weakens. The amount of error prevalent among the seceding churches of the East proves this. The Old Catholics of mid-Europe and other schismatics also have fallen away from the universal faith as a result of cutting themselves off from the center of Christian life, the Vicar of Christ.

These are facts of history that you cannot deny. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that God's true Church would be like a

city seated on a mountain, visible to all. And that she is.

The story of history proves the triumph of every Catholic claim. She was so weakened at the time when John Bunyan wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* that he believed the Papacy had lost power forever. Yet today she stands stronger than ever in the past, and her vigor is that of youth. Lord Macaulay, the great English historical essayist, hated her, but he had to admit that she was able to pull herself together with tremendous power when needed, and in his dissertation on Ranke's *History of the Popes* admits that she will still be strong as ever when a traveler from New Zealand sits on the ruins of London Bridge to sketch what is left of St. Paul's.

A mere human organization could build no work such as this. If the Church were man-made, she would have died in the tenth, again in the sixteenth, then again in the nineteenth century. If you took her out of America today, as I heard a learned lecturer once say, the people would be worshipping idols within

a century. But it is impossible to kill her. Every one who tries to burst down that wall with his head merely gets a broken head without hurting the wall. She is the supreme force in history.

At the end of my letters to you, let me say that I know of nothing else quite so like the seeming assurance of a rooster that the sun arises because of his crowing, as the self-satisfied air of modern scoffers like yourself, who think that every tenet of religion is necessarily illogical because it is put forward by believers, and that every statement of so-called "advanced thinkers" who happen to be tarred with infidelity is necessarily true and does not need investigation. Because demagogues and shysters call names at religious scholars, church men are not any the less intellectual. It is one thing to say that we lack a scientific basis for our faith; it is quite another thing to prove it; and all of your kind, despite your loud proclamations, have failed woefully in the attempt. You forget that fine writing and deep scholarship are entirely different things and that abuse is not

logic. Our faith is supernatural, but our motives of credibility are built on hard, cold facts of reasoning. And your side of the question rests on one thing alone: inferior scholarship, pompously posing as divine.

Wake up! Most of the world is laughing at you.

APPENDIX I

Philosophical Proofs That There is a God

The existence of God is not self-evident to us, but it can be demonstrated from His creatures. St. Thomas of Aquin mentions five ways in which we can prove this. In as simple language as I can, I will endeavor to explain his method, avoiding the technical terminology of the Schools.

The first proof, we derive from motion. We see motion on every side of us, and all the experimenting in the world has never been able to discover a single motion of any kind that did not have a mover. Things in action are reduced to action only by something in action. Since all things must be reduced to action by something in action, either we must admit an infinity of movers (which is absurd, for infinity demands that it be so great that nothing can possibly be added to it) or else we must admit

a Prime Mover, put in action by no other. This Prime Mover is God.[1]

The second proof we derive from efficient causation. "There is no case known (neither indeed is it possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself," says St. Thomas, "for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible." In causes, as in mo-

[1] This proof of St. Thomas has sometimes been attacked on the supposition that it holds only for what is called local motion. But it is just as effective for other kinds of motion, such as chemical and biological. Even were a chemist to deny that certain chemical reactions were actually caused by the placing of other phenomena, in the same sense that a ball moves if I push it, yet he would hardly claim that any particular set of phenomena was all sufficient in itself. Although we admitted an infinite series of phenomena (which is, of course, absurd), no one set in that series could be claimed as wholly self-sufficient. Hence we are forced outside phenomena for our ultimate explanation, i. e. to an overruling power. As for biological motion, no one unit of life can be pointed out as self-sufficient, among all that our senses can apprehend. Laboratory tests have proved conclusively that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation. Here again, then, we come across chains of causes or at least of phenomena without whose concurrence other phenomena would not arise; and hence, by St. Thomas' argument, we are driven back to the necessity of acknowledging a First Cause. Any other conceivable kind of motion will qualify to the same test.

tion, it is not possible to go on to infinity, and hence it is necessary again to admit a First Cause, who is God. God is uncaused, existing necessarily.

The third proof, which is a little harder to grasp than these, but very convincing when understood, is taken from possibility and necessity. St. Thomas says: "We find in nature things that could either exist or not exist, since they are found to be generated, and then corrupted; and consequently they can exist and then not exist. It is impossible for these always to exist, for that which can one day cease to exist must at some time have not existed.[1] Therefore, if everything could cease

[1] How can we prove that what can some day cease to exist must at some time have not existed? St. Thomas, so far as we are aware, does not specifically discuss this question, but by use of his principles we can arrive at his conclusion. Consider the following syllogism:

Major: What can cease to exist depends not on itself but on another for its existence.

Minor: But what depends on another for existence has at some time not existed.

Conclusion: Therefore what can cease to exist has at some time not existed.

Proof of the major: If a thing can cease to exist, it does not exist necessarily. But if it does not exist necessarily,

to exist, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. If this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already in existence. Therefore if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist, and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is absurd. Therefore not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. Every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another or not. It is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their

there is nothing left for it but to exist contingently. What exists contingently depends on another and therefore not on itself for existence.

Proof of minor: What depends on another for its existence must have its beginning of existence either in time or eternity. If it has it in time, our thesis stands proved. If it has it in eternity (philosophers debate whether eternal creation is intrinsically possible, while admitting theologically that creation began in time), we must at least admit a beginning of existence in a "moment of reason," and this would be sufficient to prove our contention that it has at some time not existed.

necessity caused by another, as we have already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God."

The fourth proof, the saint draws from the grades of perfection we find in things. A thing is called more or less good, noble, true and the like as it compares with something that is most perfect. So there must be admitted something which is truest, best, noblest and, consequently, uttermost being, as the truer things are, the more truly they exist. "What is most complete in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the most complete form of heat, is the cause whereby all things are made hot. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness and every other perfection; and this we call God."

The fifth proof, St. Thomas finds in the marvelous order in the world. With all the

destruction, generation, and renovation we see going on around us, there is always a perfect balance. Things which lack intelligence work out according to a marvelous plan. This could not be unless there were a supreme legislator, who ordains all natural things towards a definite purpose. This legislator is God. (*Summa Theologica,* Ques. ii, Article iii.)

Inasmuch as this line of reasoning is very abstract, perhaps a repetition of some of the facts, stated in my way, might aid. Certainly I cannot improve on St. Thomas, but the repetition might be helpful. Let us take up, then, the argument from causality.

If there were no God, you would have to admit that there are effects without a cause. And try as you will, work as long as you like, make the most elaborate tests possible, you will never discover an effect that is not caused. Science is not new. It has been with us in some form or other as long as civilization has existed. Yet it is unanimous on this, that every effect demands a cause. No law is

better established. Nothing has been oftener proved.

No matter what you examine, you are bound to find some cause or reason for it. One thing causes another, that in turn causes another, and so on. How did it all begin? Does the chain of causes reach back into infinity? That is begging the question. If a thing cannot cause itself, it has to be caused by another even in infinity. It does not matter how far you push it back, if it is caused by another it is not the cause of itself.

Nor is it possible to admit of an endless chain. Even with an endless chain, we would have to admit of a link somewhere that was uncaused. If Bill causes John, John causes Tom and Tom causes Tim, Tim could not in turn cause Bill for the very simple reason that Tim in this case would be in the unique position of being ultimately the cause of himself. A thing cannot be its own cause, for the reason that if it were it would have to exist in some way before it existed! Think it over.

The only possible explanation is to go back

to a First Cause, who is not caused even by Himself, but who exists necessarily. This is what we call God.

We do not consider God as some being who, by a freak of events, has grabbed the supreme power, like Zeus of the Greeks. We mean a being who exists necessarily. The mere fact that He exists necessarily implies that He is without limit. If He were limited, who would limit Him? It is something outside us that limits us. What exists by absolute necessity cannot be limited (a fact we will prove on page 152). Being unlimited, God is infinite. By infinity we mean something so great that you cannot possibly add anything to it and if it were possible to take anything away you would find it just as big as it ever was.

If you use your brain a little, you will have to admit that there must be some Being of this kind at the head of the universe.

What is being as we know it through our senses? It is nothing more than an imitation of this perfect Being. Creatures reflect Him in some way, every one of them. You can-

not define being if you deny God. If He does not exist, nothing exists; nothing can exist; there is no such a thing as being.

The very fact that anything else exists proves the existence of God. We come to this conclusion by a consideration that requires a little concentration to grasp, but which will stand any amount of mental testing. St. Thomas Aquinas offers the argument. He shows that whatever exists through God only would not exist if God did not exist. But whatever exists that is not God exists through God only. Therefore if God did not exist, nothing would exist.

He proves that whatever exists which is not God exists through God only by showing that if a thing does not exist of itself, it can exist only through something that does exist of its own power, which is God. But everything that is not God does not exist of its own power. Therefore it must exist through God.

And he proves that whatever exists that is not God does not exist of itself by showing that whatever exists which is not God has need

of another. But whatever has need of another does not exist of itself.

And he proves that whatever has need of another does not exist of itself because whatever exists of itself cannot depend and does not depend on any other, but whatever has need of another depends on this other. Whatever exists of itself has in itself everything that it can possibly need. The fact that there is anything that must depend on another shows the existence of something higher than itself. The very existence of anything in the universe, therefore, argues back to the existence of God. If God did not exist, nothing would exist. (See *Catechism of the Summa Theologica,* Pègues, C. 1.)

If these arguments are too deep for you, kindly consider the argument from the order that exists in the world. If the world made itself, what caused it to do so? Whence did its magnificent order arise? Whence came the marvelous variety in unity? Every leaf, for instance, has a different form. Yet how unified vegetation is! No matter how men

may conspire, they cannot overthrow the ultimate order of the universe. Blind chemicals, although they are reasonless, follow definite laws which we call science. Somebody must have done the legislating. They are guided from above.

You are the merest pygmy in creation. Universes swim through vastest space all around you. Yet to some other creatures, you are a mighty giant. Every pool of water contains millions of living creatures. All is conducted with the sublimest order. How can this be accidental? If a business runs well, you give the credit to the men in charge. Your common sense tells you that it cannot run itself. What about the biggest business, the direction of the universe? How could this possibly come about without a Head?

And we declare emphatically that this Head must be intelligent. If He were not, some of His subjects would have a perfection denied Him. He would have made us, and we would surpass Him. The conclusion is too ridiculous to ask any sane man to accept.

Science is unanimous in agreeing that no effect can possibly arise above its cause.

If the world were made by a purely accidental concourse of atoms or electrons, what kept it together after it was made? Why don't other atoms fly together occasionally and increase it? Why don't new worlds appear nearby? For the same reason, exactly, that if you want to write a book, you don't tell it to write itself and expect to have it do this.

The story is told of Napoleon that, when two would-be savants started to argue in his presence once against the existence of God, he pointed to the starry sky overhead and asked them how it was that this could be if there were no Ruler in the universe.

If we go to chemistry, we will find many proofs of a marvelous directing Force in creation. "The regular recurrence of the same mineral species has never been hindered either by the great number of causes whose interplay would, we should think, make the activities of beings capricious or disorderly," says the Cardinal Mercier Cosmology, "or by

the intervention of the free will of man who has power to vary agents and circumstances to suit his purposes, or by the ever-changing forms of environment that may be found. Simple bodies ever reappear with the same train of characteristics they exhibit in their isolated state; compounds that are time and again destroyed and as often re-formed always contain exactly the same combination of elements and exactly the same number of atoms."

The world could not have come about by mere chance. If the atoms just happened to run together without any outside force causing this concurrence, what made them deviate from the determined direction they had, and what made them stop when they had come together? Why did they not keep on going? The order in which they are found is decidedly complicated. No man can begin to grasp all the sciences, and the sciences are simply a study of the natural laws. The scientists invent nothing new themselves; they simply find out by study what has already existed. They are mere labellers. It certainly would take an in-

tellect far greater than man's to be responsible for the marvelous order we see around us in nature. And that this directing force cannot be something impersonal is proved by the fact that there are men in the world, for man's soul is a spiritual faculty and is therefore more perfect than material things. No cause can produce an effect greater than itself, and an impersonal force could not have produced persons.

If there is a God, and we all depend upon Him for our existence, we certainly must acknowledge this dependence.

APPENDIX II

How the World Came to Be

Three great systems have been propounded by scholars to account for the fact that the universe exists. By far the greatest number can see no other reason for it except that there is a God who created it. Another group holds to pantheism, which, in general, maintains that everything is God. Another holds that atoms are of themselves eternal and were brought together, most probably by chance, to form our own and other worlds.

If we hold to pantheism, we find ourselves involved in a maze of contradictions. In the first place, the theory would place limits on God. He would then be finite; but a being that exists necessarily must be infinite. If God were not infinite, who would limit Him? What would there be where He was not?

Hard as it is to think of infinity, it is harder still to think of absolute void. You cannot do it. It was this argument that made Thomas Paine, who scoffed at all that was supernatural, admit that there is a God. He became rather involved in his terms, for he was not a very profound philosopher; but his argument was excellent.

The pantheists hold to the idea of a "world-soul." But if there were a principle of life informing all the universe, the essential difference between inanimate and animate bodies would seem to disappear, and science and philosophy prove conclusively that there is such a difference. Pantheism would also do away with the difference between good and evil, and there would be no free will. God would be good and God would be bad. Hence all that reason teaches us about God and His essential goodness would be nonsense. Such absurdity cannot be true.

But how about the eternity of atoms? Could they not be necessarily existent, and could not the world have come about by their accidental

running together, no matter how improbable this might sound?

Well, first of all, as to the probability of it, this is almost too much. If you go to the top of a tower and throw alphabetic letters down all your life, there is not the least chance that they will accidentally write an epic, even though you could keep up the task for a million years. Common sense is the first requisite in arriving at truth.

Next as to the eternity of atoms and their necessary existence: If they existed necessarily, nothing that we know of would be dependent in any way on anything else. But this is too much for acceptance by any one who has had even a limited experience in the chemical laboratory or, for that matter, in the kitchen. Things have a most decided dependence, one upon the other, for their mode of existence. If a thing existed necessarily, you could not change it, no matter how you tried. You could add nothing to it and detract nothing from it. How could you, if its being were altogether necessary? No matter with what

conditions or circumstances you might surround it, they would not affect its being if that being were necessary, not contingent. How could anything be added to it? The addition would be either necessarily or contingently in being. If it were necessary, it would be infinite, and the infinite means something so great that nothing can be added or nothing subtracted. If it were contingent, it would be a different kind of being than the original stock and to admit contingency would throw out your theory of the necessary eternity of atoms.

But how do I prove that if a being is necessary it is infinite? I do this by calling your attention to the fact that a necessary being cannot possibly have any limits. If it had, who would place them? If something exists necessarily, it is not dependent in any way on anything outside itself for being, and therefore nothing outside it can limit it. Nor if it exists necessarily can it limit itself, as it has no power over its own existence. It just has to be. Hence its being must be perfect, unlimited.

If one were to accept the theory that atoms were eternal and came together accidentally, one would have to admit that outside this universe there was space or whatever you want to call it utterly devoid of all being. Neither man's intellect nor his imagination can conceive of such a condition. It is hard, as we have said before, to think of an infinite God; but it is harder still not to admit Him.

If pantheism is silly and the theory of accidental coincidence of necessarily existing atoms will not stand the test of reason, we have only one explanation of the universe left. That is creationism.

We can prove by reason that God exists. And He has told us that He created the world. Creation is His prerogative, and His alone. As the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: "The Fourth Lateran Council defined that 'God is the sole principle of all things visible and invisible, the creator of all,'" and the Bible ascribes the act of creation to Him alone. "Whether it is intrinsically possible for a creature to be endowed with creative power, theo-

logians answer with a distinction. (1) No creature can possibly be a principal cause of creation. This is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers. The philosophical reasons are: (a) the creative act, being absolutely independent of material and instrument, supposes an absolutely independent subject agent; (b) the term of the creative act is the complete substance of the effect (spiritual or material), and the act can extend indefinitely to whatever is intrinsically possible, while the act of the created agent reaches only to the accidents, or partial constituents, of bodies, and is definitely limited in range; (c) the creative act produces its effects by will alone; it is immanent, while its term is extraneous; it is as unlimited as is the extent of will power; it is instantaneous. No finite cause can thus operate. (2) Some theologians (Peter the Lombard and Suarez) have thought that a creature might be used by God as an instrumental cause of creation. The general opinion, however, is to the contrary, on the ground that since creation excludes *materia ex qua*

[material from which] there is no subject whereon the dispositive influence of an instrument could be exerted." (Vol. 4, page 474.)

The question as to whether God could have created from all eternity is philosophically disputed. St. Thomas Aquinas thought that He could. St. Bonaventure and many others deny that He could, and seem to have the best of the argument. But the distinctions are very subtle. It is a question for greater intellects than yours and mine. However, revelation tells us that creation had a beginning. The dispute refers only to the intrinsic possibility of an eternal creation.

No argument has ever yet been alleged that would destroy the reasonableness of the doctrine of creation. It is the only possible explanation of the origin of the world, if we are not to do violence to our intellects.

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